INTERPLANETARY JOURNAL OF COMIC ART

a festschrift in honor of John Lent

INTERPLANETARY JOURNAL OF COMIC ART ®™

(a festschrift in honor of John Lent)

Michael Rhode, editor

Vol. 1, No. 1

The following is a work of satire and parody, except for our affection and respect for John, which is as real as can be.

About the front cover:

Nick Thorkelson, who is old enough to remember the terrors of radio melodrama, modeled his cover drawing on the May 1940 issue of Shadow Comics, *which was itself a recycled version of a 1933* Shadow Magazine. *Both are reproduced in Ron Goulart's* Over 50 Years of American Comic Books *(Mallard Press, 1991).*

About the back cover:
Famed artist Ralph Steadman provided "The Serious Art of Laughter" upon being told of this project. Whilst sending it Mr. Steadman said, "Here is something that might suit his great name. He is the champion of the cartoon genre. Congratulations on becoming 70. Now we are equal!!"

InterPlanetary Journal of Comic Art

Published on the occasion of John Lent's seventieth birthday

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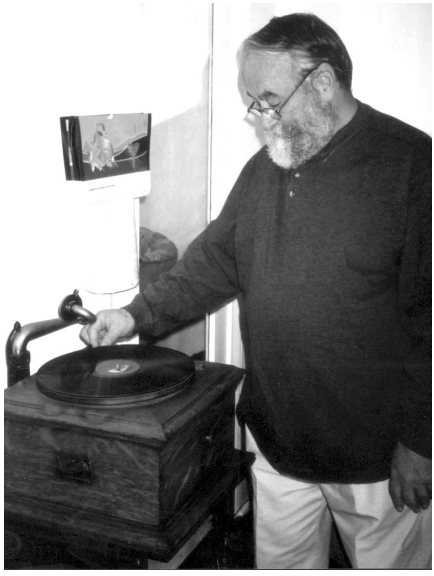
Editor's Note

Welcome to the first issue of the new *InterPlanetary Journal of Comic Art*®™ (or *IPJOCA* ®™ as we call it around the virtual office). We are proud to welcome you to the 43rd indispensable academic organ published by **JOHN LENT MULTIMEDIA ENTERPRISES.®™** All are personally hand-edited by our founder and publisher **JOHN LENT**, and we remind you that any suggestions of forced labor or involuntary servitude were completely dismissed in *Temple University grad students v.* ***JOHN LENT FAMILY CONGLOMERATE.®™*** This issue is slightly late, and we apologize for that. Editor **JOHN LENT** was traveling widely with stops on Pluto, Venus, Charon, Deimos and Phobos, Antarctica, Cyprus, Monte Carlo and the French Riviera, interviewing aging cartoonists and presenting learned discourses on the history of comic art. LENT's presentation on Pluto, "Which came first? The planet or the dog?" was particularly well-received and will appear in a future issue of *IPJOCA.*®™ *IPJOCA*®™ is a proud successor to the *Colonial Journal of Comic Art*, the *Union Journal of Comic Art*, the *Confederate Journal of Comic Art,* and the *Imperial Journal of Comic Art*, as well as the continuing flagship *International Journal of Comic Art.*

2nd Class Office Boy Michael Rhode



Editor JOHN LENT demonstrating the latest hi-tech recording apparatus used in IPJOCA's ®™ offices.

Seqart Scholarship across the United Planets: A Brief Survey

Josty Ketew
(Randy Duncan)

Derby University
(Henderson State University)

The paper and ink sequential art booklets of the 20th and 21st Centuries, what we now refer to as seqart, were, even for their time, quaintly primitive in construction and faintly disreputable in content. The art form disappeared in the mid-21st Century, evolving into a more sophisticated digital form that existed in time rather than in space. As the centuries passed it seemed that seqart was destined to be an all-but-forgotten minor cultural product, rarely mentioned even by ancient Earth historians. That changed dramatically in 3086, the breakthrough year for seqart studies, with the appearance of Arson Ekkio's *The Many Lives of the Ant-Man*, Char Atfee's *A Newly Recognized Literature: Irony and Self-Reflexivity in Devil Dinosaur*, and J'Ent's widely circulated essay "Shazam! It's Seqart," which became the basis for a popular extension course at Metropolis University. Since then academic consideration of seqart has spread throughout the United Planets.

Why do so many contemporary scholars believe seqart merits serious critical analysis? Perhaps one part of that answer can be found in the fact that the majority of these scholars are humanoid. Seqart was developed in a period that saw the beginnings of the humanoid colonization of the galaxy that led to the United Planets. Comic books, as seqart was known at the time, were also purported to have been seeded across the galaxy at that time by legendary hero Valor. [editor's note: At this point the author included a 37 page endnote explaining the existence/non-existence of Valor/M'Onel/Mon-el. Due to the excessive length of this digression, it will be published in a future issue of *IPJOCA*.®™] Perhaps some of the fascination is due to nostalgia for pulp and ink. The tactile pleasures of seqart reading were lost to humanoids with the abrupt shift to the digital sequential art form in the 21st Century; a shift attributed variously to Native American rapper-turned-artist M.C. Cloud or cult leader Mac Loud.

Whatever the reasons, seqart studies have taken root in the 31st Century, but the enthusiasm of the work is not always matched by the quality. Because so much data was lost during the EM pulse of 2054, seqart scholarship is incomplete, speculative, and somewhat ethnocentic. In his ambitious, though woefully incomplete, *Universal Encyclopedia of Seqart*, Hon Ma' Ree argues passionately for the Nembo Kid Thesis (or the NKT) that establishes the origins of seqart on Earth somewhere around the early 20th Century. It is no

doubt due to the Nembo Kid Thesis that most seqart scholarship has been written by humanoids who can trace their ancestry to Earth.

On the distant Earth colony Phlon the brilliant and prolific young ancient literature scholar Kene Kannen has argued passionately that seqart is a visual literature worthy of serious consideration. Kannen first made his case in his doctoral dissertation on the seqart of Don Heck. Kannen claims Heck demonstrated a unique understanding of the form's potential and, through his long career, expanded the possibilities of the form. His layout and composition were intricate, complex, and suffused with ennui. Kannen finds in Heck's work "a compelling example of seqart used to express the ineffable" (174).

One of the largest collections of 20th Century Earth seqart can be found on Bismol. The collection is continually being depleted and replenished because on Bismol the interest in seqart is purely epicurean. Bismollian writings about seqart are more akin to restaurant reviews than to scholarship. While it might seem that all pulp seqart, being composed of paper and ink, would taste essentially the same, many Bismollians ascribe to the belief that when it comes to eating books of any kind, the content affects the taste. Much has been written praising the rich, complex flavors of Chris Ware's work, but most writers also report a depressing aftertaste. The brief but intense rush that comes from consuming seqart both written and drawn by Jack Kirby is quite popular with young Bismollians. A minority of Bismollian comics connoisseurs feel that the flavor of a book is affected not so much by the story content as it is by the style of the artwork and even the lettering. One of the most elaborate treatises on the subject is Hu Blar's *Belles Lettres: The Exquisite Delights of Todd Klein.*

The narrowly focused seqart scholarship on Naltor was prompted by obscure references to a code contained in the comic books of the mid-20th Century. Researchers on Naltor are obsessed with cracking this hidden "comics code" which they believe makes predictions about the future. Most research has taken a mathematical approach (i.e. number and pattern of exclamation points) in the tradition of the centuries-old research on the Bible Code. Recently, Yma Yber has explored a new direction. Natives of Naltor attribute their precognitive abilities to "third eye seeing." Yber believes the key to deciphering the code can be found in injury-to-the-eye panels once popular in seqart.

The natives of Daxam have godlike powers in any yellow sun solar system, but seldom leave their red sun system due to a fatal allergy to a common substance in most of the universe – lead. Consequently, themes of power and weakness permeate their mythology, literature, and even scholarship. Daxam's leading seqart scholar, Ko-Gan, has written extensively about the vulnerabilities of powerful mythological characters.

It is not surprising to find a dearth of seqart scholarship on Colu because Coluans consider most non-Coluan intellectual and artistic pursuits beneath their notice. Ming Dos is one of the few Coluans to write about culture beyond his planet. In his seventy-two volume cultural history of humanoids, he

mentions seqart in only one line, referring to it as "inane grotesqueries" (Dos 1345).

There is scant scholarship produced on the rowdy, blue collar Rimbor, but it is Rimborian scholar Joh Nent who admonishes seqart scholars to avoid xenophobic tendencies and broaden the currently narrow focus on humanoid sequential art. He argues that contrary to the claims of the Nembo Kid Thesis, seqart was not invented in the United Planets, nor on ancient Earth, nor by a humanoid, nor, perhaps, even in this dimension.

Joh Nent was no doubt heartened by the silicon-based perspective on seqart that was coming from Dryad. The leading Dryadian writer on carbon-based life-forms, Bronä, was writing an ambitous treatise on silent seqart. The Dryads had decelerated the slow movement to what 20th Century seqart scribe Jack Kirby would likely term "a fantastic ultimate." Dryad scholars can take decades to finish one article. Therefore, the work is published one paragraph at a time. Only three paragraphs of Bronä's treatise had been carved into clay tablets before the onset of the cataclysm that destroyed Dryad. If Bronä is among the survivors of Dryad perhaps he will eventually add more paragraphs to the work.

In other parts of the galaxy historical and critical work on seqart is occurring at a somewhat more rapid pace. However, as seqart scholarship becomes more visible, it will also become more vulnerable to criticism from within the academy. If seqart scholars continue to indulge their juvenile fascinations and nostalgic longings by focusing on inconsequential creators such as Kuper, Sacco, and Ware, the field will never amount to more than a passing fad among the junior faculty. It seems obvious that seqart studies cannot attain true academic credibility until there is a sufficient body of quality scholarship on the true masterpieces of the art form. How can seqart studies be taken seriously until there are multiple critical analyses of *Brother Power, the Geek* and *The Dingbats of Danger Street*?

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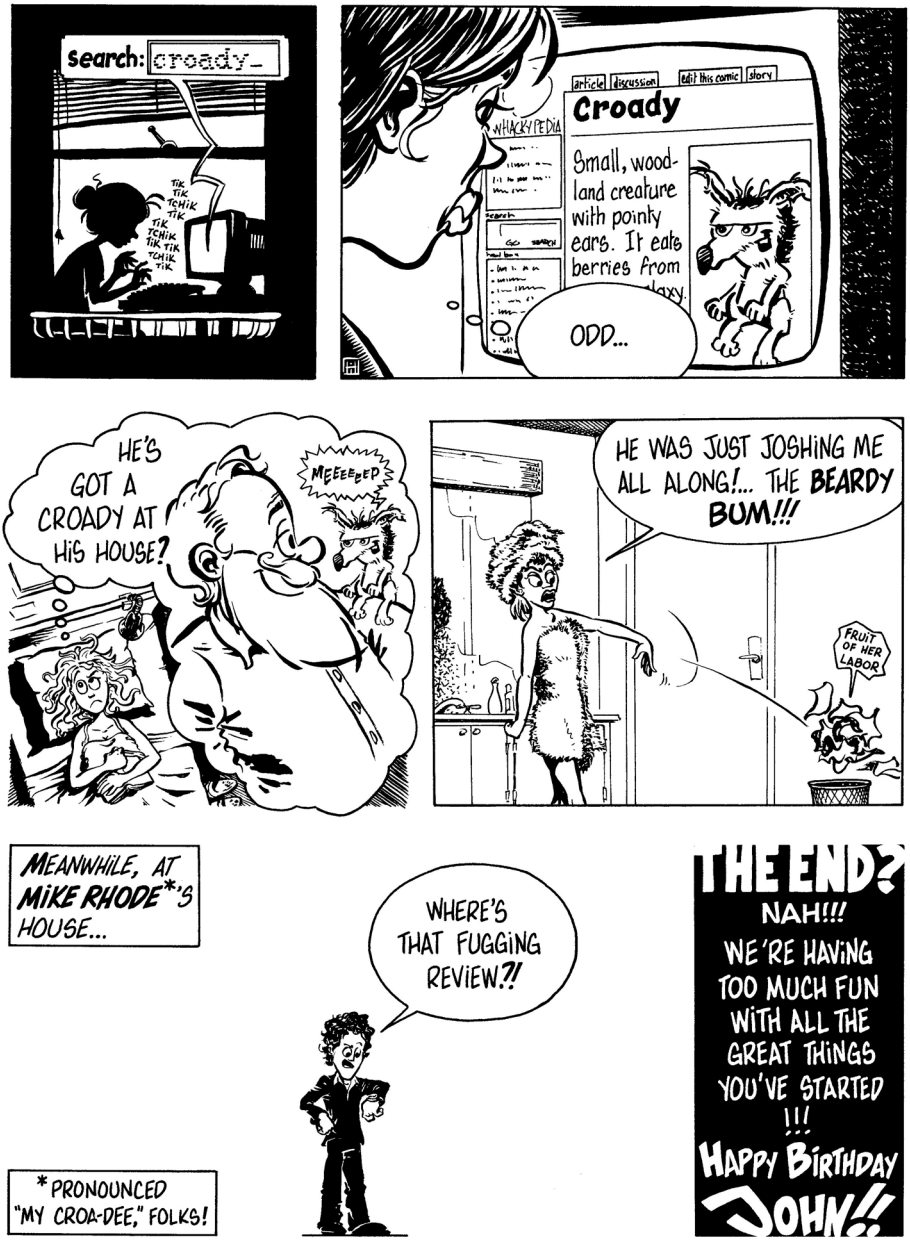
Editor JOHN LENT showing IPJOCA's ®™ portrait collection to an awestruck genuflecting intern.

IJCAF TALES

WRITTEN BY ROGER SABIN - DRAWN BY C HILL

HEY, MR. LENT!! CAN I WRITE A REVIEW FOR IJOCA?!
'COURSE, YOU CAN!
SWLEEENK
JUST SEND IT TO MY CRODY.
UH...?
O-KAY.....
ON THE FLIGHT BACK TO THE FINE UNIVERSITY OF OXVARD..
WHAT THE FUG IS A "CRODY?!"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TIK TIK TCHIK TIK
TIK TCHIK TIK TIK TCHIK TIK
article
discussion
edit this comic
story
Croady
Small, wood-land creature with pointy ears. It eats berries from
ODD...
HE'S GOT A CROADY AT HIS HOUSE?
MEEEEEEP
HE WAS JUST JOSHING ME ALL ALONG!... THE BEARDY BUM!!!
FRUIT OF HER LABOR
MEANWHILE, AT MIKE RHODE*'S HOUSE...
WHERE'S THAT FUGGING REVIEW?!
THE END?
NAH!!!
WE'RE HAVING TOO MUCH FUN WITH ALL THE GREAT THINGS YOU'VE STARTED !!!
HAPPY BIRTHDAY JOHN!!
*PRONOUNCED "MY CROA-DEE," FOLKS!

"Domus inferna Sancti Guthlaci":
A Rediscovery of the twelfth-century narrative of "The Saint and the Money Pit"

K. A. Laity

College of St. Rose

Although now recognized as the earliest example of the English comic (*bande dessinée*), the Harley Roll narrative of the life of St. Guthlac was once left to the dusty shelves of obscurity in the British Library. However, in 1953 the intrepid comics scholar John Lent—on a brief layover while heading to Nepal to interview the creator of *That's My [Dalai] Lama*—ran across an offhand reference to the roll, which misidentified it as a plan for stained glass windows. Lent immediately recognized the absurdity of this notion, for in several of the illustrations, the figures fall outside the lines of the panels into the gutter.

Mistaken, too, was the notion that the comic simply told the tale of the rather mundane conversion of the Anglo-Saxon saint. A close reading of the narrative, Lent discovered, revealed a more nuanced and tragic tale of the horrors of home building. While it remained a rather esoteric topic for the early Middle Ages (where the majority of the audience would have lived either in the communal world of the monastery or the rarified atmosphere of the royal court—where such hands-on projects would have been anathema), the tortured life of the DIY house owner continues to attract modern audiences in droves. It is perhaps even easier for a modern householder to identify with the sufferings and eventual death of the holy man of Croyland.

What follows is a short explication of the basic account of the saint's struggle against the odds, from leaky roofs and stubborn foliage to duplicitous contractors and crooked housing inspectors. It is a failing of our century that more scholars are not acquainted with the felicities of Latin, but one hopes that this rendering in plain English—based in large part on Dr. Lent's pioneering initial work on the text—will result in greater attention paid to this influential early comic book. Despite its unwieldy format (the roll never proved popular even in England, and the smaller, lighter French vellum comic—known as the *caninette*—quickly became the standard), the Harley Roll's tale of a great man against even greater odds speaks to the heart and soul of house owners the world over.

PLATE 1: With little fanfare, the young Anglo-Saxon soldier (right) takes his leave of the army. His colleagues, aware of his plans to build a home in the Croyland swamp, attempt to dissuade the promising young leader from certain failure. They are without success. Notice the colorist's[1] attempt to foreshadow the outcome of this adventure with the green highlights throughout the image, indicating the money that will soon be bleeding from Guthlac's pocketbook. Even the horses seem to stamp their feet at the folly of the would-be house hunter. Guthlac's nearest comrade covers his chest with his shield, as if to guard against the wreckage, and points one finger toward his former captain. Common in late Anglo-Saxon art, this gesture typically marks the *burse* (lit. "purse," however in common usage, the word denotes a "spendthrift" or "moneybags" and was considered derogatory).

[1] The staff of *IPJOCA* ®™ regret that examining the budget, including turning it upside down and fiddling around inside with a butter knife, did not reveal enough money for color plates.

PLATE 2: The former soldier takes up the cleric's tonsure here. While he did not originally plan to take up holy orders, Guthlac found that the best mortgage rates were available from the local Archbishop. This coiffurial conversion was common practice in many regions across Europe, and is where the phrase "taking a little off the top" originated. While it once meant tonsure, it soon came to mean skimming profits as more than a few bishops proved to be less than wholly committed to poverty. On the far right it is possible to see Guthlac's sister Pega, who will play an important role in the story as it develops. On the far left, you can see the young man Beccelm, soon to be Guthlac's partner in life and, less successfully, in home building.

PLATE 3: Guthlac submits to the blessing of the Bishop Pomfrey, who sprinkles holy water as the last of the binding steps of the mortgage signing. The phalanx of lawyers on the right hold up the various forms and documents that have been copied in triplicate over the ensuing months since the formal tonsure. The cup Guthlac holds represents the amount of gold he must pay every quarter year toward the mortgage. Note the subtle green motifs[2] highlighting every aspect of the *mise-en-scène*.

[2] Ibid.

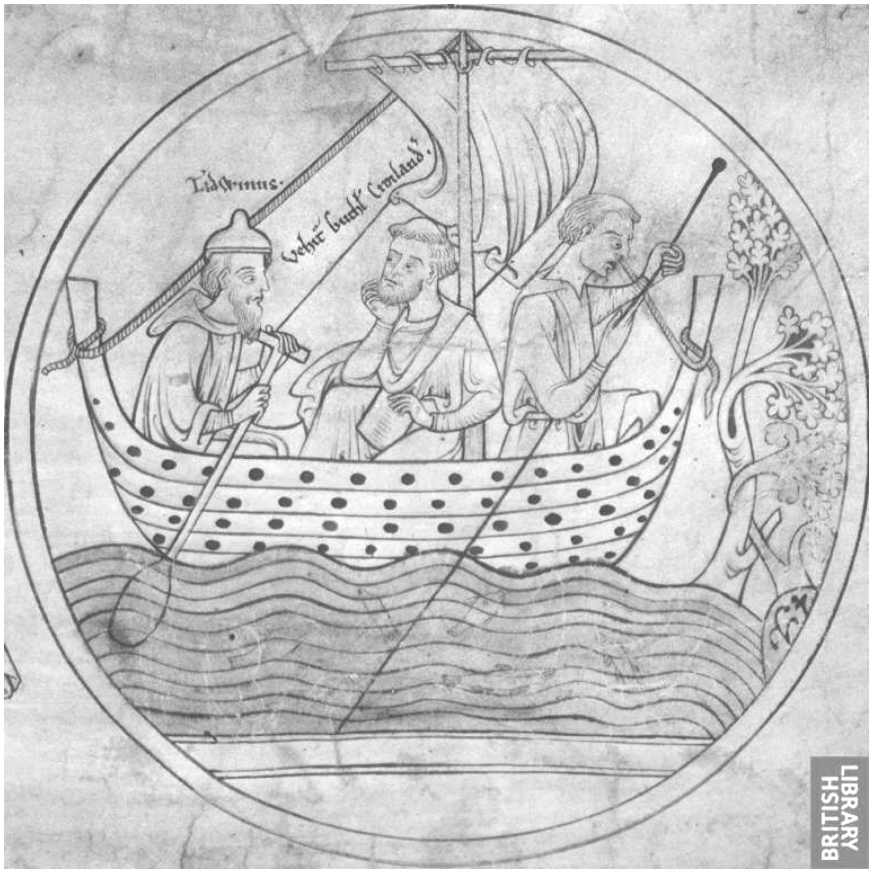

PLATE 4: Full of hope, Guthlac heads by boat to the remote island where he has purchased property to build his dream house. The green color of the water presages the expenditures which will soon threaten to bring him to ruin, but the dreamy countenance of the young saint clearly ignores the warning signs of the lake as well as those of his friend Tatwin (whose name literally means "planet where the sky-walkers dwell"). Clearly the environment broadcasts its unsuitability, which the artist shows via the fish, which appear to be attacking the boat directly and the trees whose misshapen forms suggest the hardships ahead. Some scholars believe that the artist has hidden her name in the roots of the green[3] tree (later to prove so troublesome) with the symbol for the thorn bush and a cross of pain, which may be rendered as the name "Thornblaed" or literally, "thorn-blister." This may, of course, be only a pseudonym. Note, too, how Tatwin's assistant battles a reptile ("wurm") with his nose. This was the common practice of the Croyland area, though little used elsewhere in England.

[3] Op. cit.

PLATE 5: Construction of the structure commences. While Guthlac oversees the building site on a daily basis, he nonetheless falls prey to the wily maneuvering of the Masons who, unbeknownst to the young saint, utilize the project to advance their secret plans to control England via strategic placement of symbolic buildings (cf. Moore and Campbell, 1998). Just visible on the previous panel is the tree that a certified forester assured he had removed. This topic will recur later. Note the primitive working conditions and complete lack of OSHA protections. Many an eager house builder has lost his life to a careless masonry-related accident like the one that appears to be looming here. While Beccelm and the mason wear protective leather helmets, Guthlac works with a foolhardy disregard of such precautions.

PLATE 6: Here we see the first appearance of the contractors. Unlike today, where polite regard (or political correctness, it is rumored) softens the cruel truth, there is no ambiguity for the anonymous Anglo-Saxon artist, who simply draws them as demons. The variety of medieval demons is vast, but it is worth pointing out some of the standard iconic indicators: monkey features usually indicate a specialty in pipes (due to the long-standing monkey-feces connection), while bird features indicate an expertise in windows, and those with the features of common beasts of burden are believed to have been standard lumber contractors. At the center of the scene, Guthlac wields a scourge. This instrument of torture and mortification was commonplace when dealing with contractors in the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman eras. It is a pity of modern life that such methods are no longer legal, for these characters were already well known for their lies and misdirection. One can observe how Guthlac has brought the recalcitrant contractor to heel with the use of the scourge; the demon's glaringly visible genitals demonstrate the arrogant nature of the contractor which has led to this state of affairs. While the saint has the upper hand at the moment, clearly he has been unwise to allow so many of the buggers to gather together at the same time, for he is unlikely to remain in charge for long.

PLATE 7: Sure enough, the contractors succeed in turning the tables on the hapless homeowner. They produce scourges of their own and force the young man to accompany them on yet another pointless buying trip, looking at endless swatches of thatch and wattle—useless because he has already begun construction of a brick house, which he believes will be mighty, letting it all hang out against the predations of Croyland weather and the persistent damp of the swamp. In the lower left quadrant, Beccelm gestures in vain, protesting against the precipitous removal of Guthlac. He stares at the gold[4] cup, wondering who will be able to make the mortgage payment this quarter. Note the demons' wings, often rumored to be a hidden capability of the contractors though seldom depicted. The wings enable them to disappear at a moment's notice; note, too, the green[5] girdle of the contractor beneath Guthlac, protecting the demon from death in battle and from any resulting lawsuits.

[4] Ditto.

[5] Double ditto.

PLATE 8: Yet at the very gates of Hell itself (here depicted as a sort of medieval equivalent of Wal-Mart on a very hot August night in Alabama), Guthlac escapes the clutches of the contractors with the help of Bartholomew, an experienced builder in East Anglia, sainted by his followers for building a second storey atop a planned one-storey house, yet keeping under budget. The greenish haloes surrounding the two saints convey the money saved by turning away from the spend-thrift consultants. Bartholomew offers Guthlac a new and improved scourge with which to keep the contractors obedient to his will. In the pit we can see a king and a bishop who were not so lucky, led further and further down into the darkness as they are convinced to build further additions or to modernize their kitchens. Note the Mediterranean influence in the brick decorations around the Hell mouth. For the rain-soaked Croyland audience, no doubt southern heat remained a shorthand metaphor for Hell.

PLATE 9: Nonetheless, the contractors' efforts have taken their toll. Guthlac continues working, transmitting his instructions through Beccelm, but he grows steadily weaker. In a vulnerable moment, he agrees to have handmade ceramic tiles in the kitchen (requiring a wait of over six weeks for the crafter to complete the order). The delay nearly kills him, but Beccelm doggedly works to revive Guthlac's spirits. The onerous weight of the quarterly mortgage payments, however, (visible as always in the form of the golden[6] goblet) begins to tell, and Guthlac slips further from robustness even as the colonnades are brought nearer to completion.

[6] We told Laity there was no money for color! She wouldn't listen!

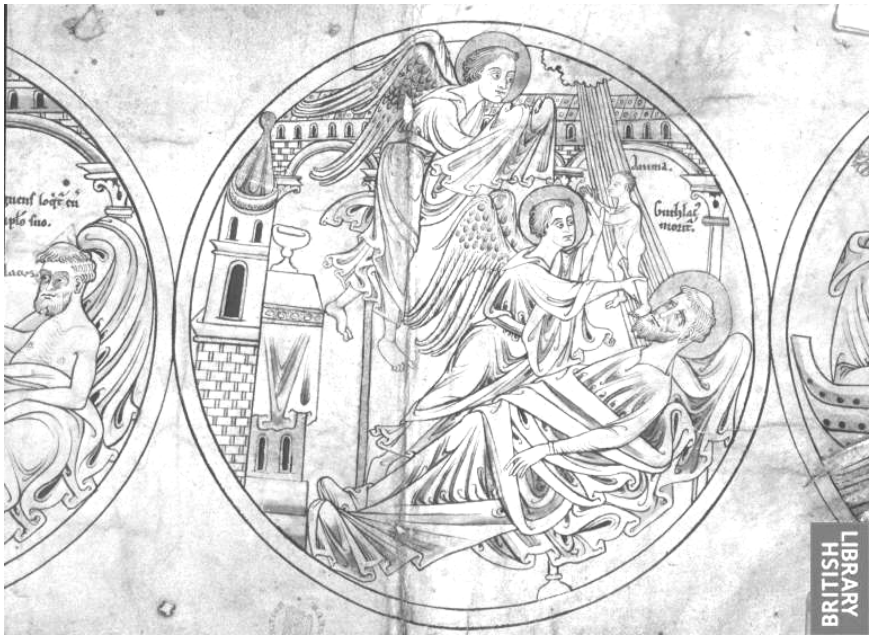

PLATE 10: In a pointless attempt to cheer the ailing saint, his neighbors visit with their allegedly "angelic" child. Beccelm allows the visit because Guthlac has whispered that the obnoxious pair might be able to lend them a little extra money to cover the ballooning costs of the building project (thus the green nimbus around each parent's head). Note how the golden[7] patina has been left off the goblet in this panel, indicating Guthlac's inability to come up with the required mortgage payment. The saint is clearly distracted in this panel even as the precocious child performs the *ricsere*, a dance much beloved of spoiled children in the Anglo-Saxon era. While the cloud and rain may symbolize the saint's failing hope and health even as the dance proceeds, it may too represent the very real rain of a very wet spring in Croyland—predicting or even causing the future appearance of the tree that sprouts in the midst of the building site [see next panel].

[7] Look, we've explained this and apologized. Just let it go.

PLATE 11: In which is portrayed the sad demise of the DIY saint—Guthlac succumbs to a fever just as the Easter holiday hits and the contractors disappear for what proves to be a three week absence. The golden mortgage goblet stands empty. The undesirable tree has shot up to gigantic proportions. Beccelm holds up the unfulfilled contract and waves a censer filled with noxious incense in an attempt to uproot the tree. Two monks and a nun gather to verify the saint's death (and consequent lack of payment) as Beccelm displays the body on an unfinished sideboard (materials from Normandy, but crafted by local artisans in Croyland). Note the telltale Croylandish slipshod masonry on the house. The final mason left so hurriedly that his cloak can be seen hanging from the entryway arch. The panel above it—finished in Icelandic *moorit* tiles—makes up the traditional Masonic "devil-catcher" pattern. It is this knowledge which allows the Masons to retain control of projects administered by the otherwise intractable contractors.

PLATE 12: Beccelm conveys the sad news of Guthlac's demise to the saint's sister, Pega. She is shocked to learn that her brother's decline took place so quickly—and that she has been left the house and its hemorrhaging mortgage. Guthlac's lawyer looks on with some consternation, again making the sign of the *burse*, though whether he refers to Beccelm or Pega is uncertain. Pega's husband Cynebald looks on with concern, but is unable to resist the idea of at last being a homeowner, as they have been renting for years in the competitive East Anglian market where housing costs can equal double or treble the rent of a well-fed sow. Cynebald and the lawyer each grip a contemporary example of a *slypraesn* or "sliding beam," generally used to make an emphatic point by thrusting it into the ground, then sliding the hand off it dramatically, leaving the beam erect and (presumably) the point made. While Pega's stance (with one foot in the boat) indicates her willingness to take on her late brother's project, her husband appears more reluctant. The shifting ground beneath their feet (represented by the small malformed bushes on rocks) suggests that the road ahead remains perilous.

PLATE 13: The final panel reveals the horrors that finally leave Guthlac's dream house empty and decaying. In it, the much put-upon Pega—looking a mere shadow of her former robustness—falls before the onslaught of the ceaseless army of creditors. The man in front represents the local co-operative money exchange's attempts to levy a *burhbot* upon the house, "a liability for the repair of the walls of a town or fortress" (Clark Hall, 1931). Unaware that the city (in the person of a deceitful building inspector) had rezoned the property into a Section 3 sub A "fortress or stronghold," Pega had not provided adequate sums for the restoration of the (still unfinished) outer wall. To be strictly legal, Pega could not be held responsible for "repairing" what had not in fact been built; however, she remained unaware of this due to poor legal advice. Cynebald—who had taken a number of evening classes in the statutes of King Edward—felt competent to advise his wife but quickly lost confidence when bombarded by an endless line of money-seeking vendors and contractors. While

most of the claims might have been dismissed as *sceawendspraeca* ("buffoonery," the concept which coincidentally gave its name to the Anglo-Saxon equivalent of word balloons), Pega and her husband eventually gave up on the project and lost the mortgage to the foreclosing monastery. Finding the location too detrimental to human habitation, the monks left the project unfinished and thus one can see its remains even to this day. The now-giant tree towers over the ruins of the masonry and the swamp threatens every year to reclaim the beorg upon which it rests. No wonder an anonymous scop (literally 'poet,' but here more accurately a 'stanlee,' an omniscient narrator / editorial voice) lamented:

Wrætlic is þes wealstan, Wyrde gebræcon;
Burgstede burston, Brosnaþ enta geweorc…

Well-wrought is this wall / broken by wyrds;
Burst are the walls of the stronghold / crumbled this work of giants…

Perhaps the depressing nature of this signal narrative in Anglo-Saxon comics led to the historical denigration of the art form. Not until the 1980s would English comics return to this brooding darkness, so apparently the anonymous scribe was simply 800 years ahead of her/his time (a not unusual opinion among comics writers). Thanks to **JOHN LENT** and the British Library, Guthlac of Croyland can now take his place beside Gotham's Batman and New York City's Rorschach in endless fanboy debates.

ICAF Round-table: 'The Contribution of John Lent'

Transcribed by Rogerius Sabinis

Present: Alan Morose (comics writer and magickian), Chris Wheresthepoint (comics creator); Trina Rubbinoutmaleoppression (herstorian), Charles Hashfuelled (academic, Chair).

CH: Welcome! We're here to discuss the contribution to comics history – and, if I may, historiography; nay, historio-social-culture – of John Lent. But first, BEARDS. Trina, any thoughts on the Lent beard?

TR: It is a particularly fine beard, lustrous towards the edges, not too fluffy. Just right, I'd say.

AM: My own beard was directly inspired by the Lent beard.

CW: Groan…I don't know why I'm even here… I don't have a beard and even if I did I'd worry that it was exactly symmetrical. Oh god…

CH: Perhaps the beard is a symbol of Lent's disgust with the Bush regime, his willingness to empathise with the beardier regions of the world in terms of comics.

TR: Yes, but his insistence that every contributor to IJOCA should have a beard was a little offputting to women. I bought a false one just to keep him happy, but it was very itchy.

CH: Hey, Alan, careful with that stick!

AM: It's not a stick. It's a magick wand - so just watch it.

CH: What are you talking about?

[FTOOOM!! Alan Morose waves his wand in the air, and in a puff of smoke turns Chris Wheresthepoint into a goat.]

TR: Whoa! That was great! Now he's got a little goaty beard!

CW: Braaaayyyyy!!!

CH: If we can return to the matter in hand…

Continued next issue due to circumstances beyond *IPJOCA's*®™control.

Give It Up For Lent!

E.C. Lockett, from ideas by Sabin & Rhode

The Exegesis[8] of John Lent's Exegesis[abcd]: A Postmodest[9e] Explalicinalysis [10] of John Lent's Comicological Scholarship.

Dr. Solomon Davidoff

John Lent's many and varied researches into comic's history and social impact are legion.[11] His work has been described as endoscopic-esque, for the way he probes, ever digging deeper, from the smallest viewpoint to a larger reservoir of pedagogical examination, explication, and analysis.

Also continued next issue due to circumstances beyond *IPJOCA's*®™ control.

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[8] I've always liked this word. A real humdinger if you ask me.

[a] There really isn't a footnote here . . . this is just the only way I could think of to add this note in.

[b] Whoops! Silly of me . . . I forgot to put the note I wanted to make in there! It was about a comment made in the first footnote, which is why I needed to make a second footnote, but rather than make a second footnote using a number, I used letters so you wouldn't get confused. Hope it worked!

[c] Oh darn it! I forgot the footnote again! Here it is. Ahem. "Wow! My word processing software actually knew the term 'humdinger!'" Kinda anticlimactic now, I know.

[d] I wonder . . . has anything ever been classified as "unclimactic?"

[9] Look, let's face it . . . John's getting up there in years. If he isn't over modesty by NOW, there's no hope for him! Besides, what does he have to be modest about? A wise man (that means I don't remember who it was) once said modesty is a game for children, and that adults admit to their strengths and weaknesses. Dr. John Lent's work within comics scholarship demonstrates his incredible strengths within the field. However, in all honesty, I have to admit while I've heard he makes a terrible Fluffernutter Frappé, I cannot speak to that with any degree of authority, as he's never made me one. *sniffle*

[e] Got it! The quote is in the book *The Way to Dawnworld* by Bill Starr. Positively compares to early Heinlein juveniles, and a pleasant read, as is the sequel *The Treasure of Wonderwhat*. I used to have a really spiffy copy of that second one, till I put it down on a bench while reading it on top of some bird poop. Sad, really. Now the pages have this really big stain, and I'm stuck with an entry on my vita that has the words "bird poop" in the footnotes! Where's the justice in that, I ask you!

[10] Explalicinalysis is defined as a combination of Explanation, Explication, and Analysis. The term is copyright 2006 Solomon Davidoff;, all rights, physical, virtual, plasmatic, or ethereal are reserved, and any use, citation, examination, or research into said term is subject to a modest fee designed to buy cat food, so the beast won't step on the keyboard anymore, cutting out letters from previously typed phrases such as "explanation, explication, and analysis."

[11] More detail is naturally available, but providing it would necessitate another bibliographic entry, and I'm just feeling too low energy to do that now. Maybe later.

Cartooning on Venus: A Problematic Field

2nd Class Office Boy Michael Rhode

For many years, rumors of cartoonists on Venus have been reaching the ears of those of us at *IPJOCA*®™. Our intrepid editor **JOHN LENT**, accompanied by 2nd Class Office Boy Michael Rhode, recently traveled to our sister planet to discover the truth.

The harsh Venusian environment has played havoc with the development of cartooning. The constant lashings of acid rain ensure that no cartoon survives long beyond its creation. Each cartoon must be engraved onto a hard rock with an even harder 'pen' usually made of diamond. Venusians are mildly telepathic and this has proven to be the main method of transmission of cartooning. When a cartoon is created, the rock is shown to the cartoonists' family and friends who memorize it. They in turn pass the image along to their acquaintances until most of the clan has seen it. The image is held in the group memory for as long as someone can recall it. Unfortunately for non-life-supporting functions this tends to be only about 5 7/8th Venusian years. Really striking work may last longer; H'rbl'ck's (all names are phonetically transcribed) denunciation of politician Tr'ckee D'ck has lasted thirty years although his earlier caricature of McC'rthee is only remembered in its broad outline.

H'rbl'ck art - McC'rthee is barely remembered; Tr'ckee D'ck is still recalled.

G'ree-Gr'th is one of the second generation students of the field, following in the footsteps of T'm Eenge, M'r'ce H'rn, D'n 'Lt and others. Gr'th bemoaned the state of knowledge about early cartoonists. "At the beginning of their career, someone like Eenge or H'rn may have been given a vague awareness of the work of N'st or T'pff'r or O'tc'lt, but that work is completely lost to us now. The original has vanished and no one can recall the works to pass along to new generations." Gr'th was particularly bitter about the work of

one cartoonist: "Even the godlike K'rbee is being forgotten and we only have pale imitations of his works perpetuated by hacks. His originals were used as building material by the penny-pinching scum at his long-time company M'rv'l when they attempted to create a new office." The building collapsed as they usually do on Venus, and we are told one can infrequently glimpse the corner of one of K'rbee's drawings protruding from the shifting rubble until the acid rain scours it away.

K'rbee drawing briefly exposed as rubble shifts.

As a result of the ephemeral nature of cartoon studies on Venus, each new generation tends to completely reinvent the field. Chr'st'n H'll teaches cartooning at one of the larger universities. He told us, "Cartooning in my clan Fr'nce was well-accepted, and people were used to devoting a large amount of group memory to recalling and passing along artwork. This is not the case in the C'l'f'rnee clan I currently reside in, where cartoons are seen as an entertainment for children. I find it very difficult to get my students to pay attention to even the works of a giant such as Sch'lz. If they study at all, they all want to be the next D'snee."

JOHN LENT MULTIMEDIA ENTERPRISES®™ is planning a campaign to help Venusian cartoonists through the sale of their 'pens', scores of

which were given to us as souvenirs. We are in touch with several groups on Earth regarding the marketing of the 'pens' and as soon as negotiations are finalized with DeBeers, we will make an announcement regarding the establishment of a trust fund with part of the proceeds.

Editor JOHN LENT returning to America after accepting the John Buscema lifetime achievement award, October 2006.

Cheroots of the Gods:
Ancient Contact with Talking Animals from the Stars

Er'q Vondan Iken
(Steve Thompson)

Recent archaeological excavations in the southeastern portion of the continent NoAm, specifically the section coded GAFL, makes it clear that not only did the inhabitants believe in beings from other planets, but they had a history of visits from them and even built altars and landing strips for them. In a newly released set of reports by the noted historian J'onn Lo'aned, he reports on the discovery of a series of documents which supports this view.

It has been well-established that the residents of GAFL had only a primitive knowledge of the universe. During Lo'aned's extensive excavations in the area, he uncovered an area apparently known to the natives as "Universe Studies," a large complex containing many shrines to and representations of talking animals. Available evidence shows that the GAFL population was knowledgeable enough in the biological sciences to know that it was not possible for the animal inhabitants of the area to speak, and yet they built numerous structures dedicated to creatures who could do just that. How else can we explain this, except through visitations from aliens from other planets who appeared similar to the local fauna?

One of the critical discoveries made by Dr. Lo'aned was a sealed box containing a group of illustrated accounts of such explorations by aliens. Since the culture at the time did not have access to lasers for permanent printing, these accounts were on a series of very thin, flexible mats constructed of a fibrous plant material. The images were then placed on these mats using an early printing method which involved a reversed version of the images which was coated with some kind of viscous liquid. The reversed image was then pressed against the fiber mat, transferring the liquid (and the image) to it.

Obviously, such methods of reproduction were slow and cumbersome, and the result could not have been expected to last more than a few decades. It was just chance that caused the examples uncovered by Dr. Lo'aned to be preserved, having been encased in a clear, chemically inert plastic substance. Such use of advanced technology to preserve anything speaks not only to the importance of the material preserved, but also to the fact that it was probably the result of contact with an advanced civilization.

While it is evident to any intelligent being today that civilization will only develop in one species on any given planet, these primitive people believed that a wide variety of species would interact everywhere, instead of just on our Judicial Planet. The fact that the people of GAFL built so many shrines

representing a wide variety of talking animals proves beyond doubt that they must have had contact with exploratory ships from many worlds.

Some of the illustrated accounts, which Dr. Lo'aned calls "co'mix strips,"[1] take place in a place called the Okeydokey Swamp.[2] Mention is made of a "creator" of the characters, referred to as "Walt" with what is presumably a patronymic of "Kelly" or "Disney" (reports vary) attached. The differing patronymics may be evidence of a religious schism at some point, with both factions acknowledging the god Walt, but splitting into either Kellyites or Disneyans along some undetermined doctrinal lines. One major difference between the groups seems to relate to body coverings – the main totem of the Disneyans is often shown only with clothing on the lower portion of the body, while that of the Kellyites only covers the top. It does seem clear that the Kellyites held sway in the northern portion of GAFL, while the Disneyans controlled the southern lands.

The Disneyans appear to be the more powerful of the two groups, at least financially, as they are responsible for the construction of a second gathering/worship center dubbed "Walt Disney's World." The very name of this center offers additional proof that the inhabitants of GAFL believed all their talking animal gods came from a single planet. Their attempt to duplicate the "home planet" of their gods speaks both to their devotion and wealth. Many adherents made multiple pilgrimages to the temple, and the priests and acolytes all wore stylized costumes representing their individual god. The temple also included many "gift shops" with miniaturized talismans of the various gods.[3]

Not far from the temples of "Walt Disney's World" and "Universe Studies" is an enormous landing field known as Cape Cana-vera. The name here is evidently an acknowledgement of a standard piece of apparel worn by gods to whom extraordinary physical or mental powers were attributed[4], along with two words from an even earlier language meaning "honest companion."[5] The size of this facility, larger than most similar "plane depots" used for handling the slow, motorized mass-transit vehicles, indicates it either processed or was intended to process multiple take-offs and landings of inter-planetary vehicles daily. Why

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[1] Derived from the words "collected" and "mixed," with the "strips" of fibrous material

[2] It should be noted that another researcher, Prof. Ned of the Flanders Institute, translates the location as the Okely-Dokely Swamp.

[3] This is an example of language change as well. While today we understand "gift" to mean something given freely from one to another, the "gifts" in the temple had to be purchased, either as a means of placating the gods or bribing the priests.

[4] A "cape" was a loose piece of cloth, fastened at the neck and hanging down the god's back, covering the auxiliary personal levitation equipment.

[5] Cana = dog, a common talisman used to protect individuals and homes; vera = truth, honesty. A recent popularized description of the area described this interpretation of a "dog god" (note the palindromic appearance) as "goofy."

would any culture build such a facility unless it was going to be used? We can therefore deduce that the people of GAFL were very familiar with the concept of space travel, even if their experiences with it were only in legends and racial-memory.

That these people did not have even the rudiments of space travel themselves is shown in some of the co'mix strips featuring a small god called "Pege" or "Pogo" (the poor printing technique makes interpretation difficult) who, with two companions, is shown venturing into outer space in a large open cooking vessel. While so traveling, they pass another vehicle, also inhabited, which appears to be some sort of facility for communal bathing (figure 1). The fact that neither vehicle takes into account the need to provide pressure and atmosphere in space shows that the worshippers are merely imitating observed behavior of their gods, without a concept of the underlying technology.

Figure 1

Another version of these characters, this one showing remnants of color, even shows them in space suits, again in imitation of their gods (figure 2). One of these characters, called Bartle, strongly resembles the inhabitants of the planet Gaytor, and carries what we today would call a cheroot. In the terminology of the GAFL people, it was evidently referred to as a "see-gar." This term, strangely enough, is also used in reference to a humanoid argonaut, who is portrayed as receiving his nutrients exclusively through leafy vegetation. Whether this is the same material that the co'mix strip mats were constructed from, or whether it is a plant the humanoid gathered from the sea on its travels, is not clear.

Obviously, there is a great deal of research still to be done on understanding these ancient peoples and their animal-worshiping culture. We look forward to receiving additional reports from Dr. Lo'aned and his associates as their excavations continue.

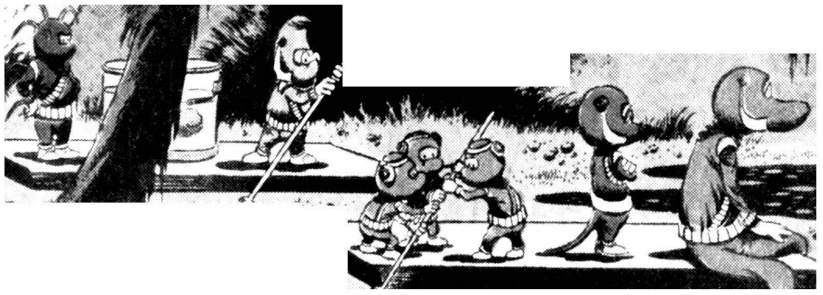

Figure 2

Letters

Dear John,

Since we first met at the AAS in Chicago, where I gave my first presentation about Japanese comics in the US, I've enjoyed working with you, joining your panels in Singapore, Japan, Toronto, and Philadelphia. I am very happy that I could have you as a member of my dissertation committee. You gave me much happiness via studying comics and I learnt from you how important comics scholarship had been. I always wish you best and look forward to working with you more in the future.

Sincerely,

Fusami

Fusami Ogi, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Dept. of English

Chikushi Jogakuen University, JAPAN

Case #622445454-51212/96

POI: John Lent

Obs: 4/11/60-12/17/66

Agent: Sgt. Major S. Juspeczyk

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Further, subject in question known to frequent "comics" communities AKA geek fests where he is conversant with their peculiar terminology and apparently well known to a large part of the community. Subject was observed [redacted] J [redacted] Kirby (AKA FF) and [redacted]. There was no mention of money changing hands, however, Lent was later seen in the possession of several of the suspicious volumes. Meanwhile, Betelgeusen authorities reported that Lent, [redacted] and S[redacted] Ditko (AKA A=A, Francon and Roark) were seen gathering outside the publisher's location around four o'clock (BMT) where a short time later the chaos broke out and [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

and several butcher's aprons. INTERPOL officers called to the scene reported that Lent and his cohorts declared "[redacted]

[redacted],which can only be assumed to be true.

While the incident did not result in arrests, suspicions were raised sufficient to require continued monitoring of this volatile person and his nearest cohorts, including [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], [redacted] and of course, S[redacted] Lee, (AKA Papa Bear). If observed near a printing press, subject should be apprehended at once.

Single page of a missing larger document found in the archives by

5th Class Files Clerk K.A. Laity

Give It Up For Lent!
E.C. Lockett, from ideas by Sabin & Rhode

Men's Comics are from Mars, Women's Comics are from Venus: A Visual Exploration

M.O.D.O.C.A.

(Mental Organism Designed Only for Critical Analysis, a.k.a. Barbara Postema)

Introduction

In the analysis of Earth comics one may come to a striking observation when considering the body of work that incorporates the human female figure: In the manner in which Earth women are shown there is a visible divide along the lines of who is doing the representing: men or women. The samples below illustrate this cleavage, the first pages illustrating a corpus taken from comics by (and for?) men, the second spread offering comics by women. While I will let the gentle reader come to his or her own conclusions, I will also offer a few words of commentary.

Laura Mulvey discusses the presence of the female body on the film screen in her seminal essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," and I think her observations may apply to representations of women in comics as well. Of woman on screen, Mulvey writes: "her visual presence tends to work against the development of a story line, to freeze the flow of action in erotic contemplation. This *alien* presence then has to be integrated into cohesion with the narrative"(837, my emphasis). The same accusation may be brought against woman in the comics panel. The first samples below show that the women in these comics can be lifted very easily out of their narrative context, but even within that context their presence invites one to linger over their forms and let the gaze wander.

In the second collection of samples, taken from comics by (and for?) women, this wandering eye, this leisurely gaze is not encouraged. In fact, here the narrative seems to actively resist being paused: it is harder to take these images out of sequence or divorce them from their narrative contexts. Not only that, even the physical attributes of these women are in dramatic contrast with those from our first sample.

In looking at these images of women as perceived by males and by females, one has to wonder if the two forms even represent the same species. Perhaps they don't. Which would explain a lot.

1
Yeah, but these high-heeled pieces of...
Damnit!
IN ALL MY LIFE SUCH CLOTHING AS THIS I HAVE NEVER SEEN
WELL UNLESS VALIANT THAT STUFF AT THE FREAKIN' FRIDAY NIGHT
BUT THE COSTUME IS BEAUTIFUL! IS THE FIT--PERFECT! HOW DID YOU...?

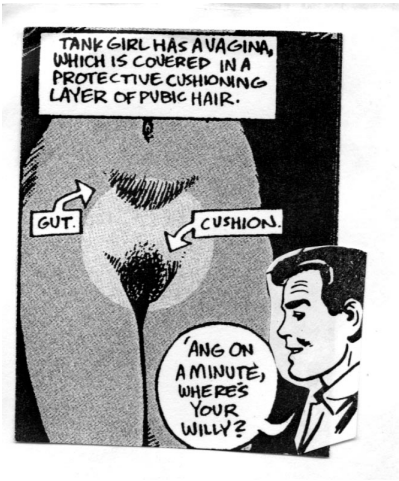
UHH!

Wheee!
No one sees me!
I'm Annie
faster than flash!
LET'S GO!
WOO!
ROAR-R-R
HELP!
LOOK!
SEE, I'M ACTUALLY A BOY!
WHOA!
SHE REALLY IS A BOY!
WOW!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY WERE DUMB ENOUGH TO FALL FOR THAT--

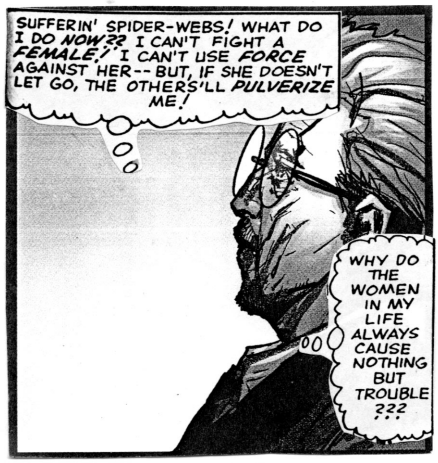
FEELING LIKE A BOY (AND ENJOYING IT ALL OVER AGAIN)
SHUT UP.
THIS IS PRETTY DRESS, ANN. TOO BAD YOU HAVE ONLY CRABBY FACE TO WEAR WITH IT.
HE CAN COVER THAT BLEMISH WITH MAKE-UP!
AH SHIT! I FORGOT TO GET PICTURES OF THE HOOD IN DRESS AGAIN!!
NEW YORK
ONE HAS NOT ARRIVED AT ALL
THE STANDARD OF LIVING PERPETUATING
THE ELITE PATRIARCHAL POWER STRUCTURE
SURE.
CAN I USE SOME?
GOD, YOUR LIPS LOOK LIKE RAW MEAT!
EXCELLENT
2R
VERO
CLICK
Hey
I'm going to g'mama's place!
the ship will get Hero about
I don't much like sitting next to her
Laura
THUS, AN ATTITUDE THAT WILL LAST A LIFETIME WAS BORN...
2
1.0

Notes

1


TANK GIRL HAS A VAGINA, WHICH IS COVERED IN A PROTECTIVE CUSHIONING LAYER OF PUBIC HAIR.
GUT.
CUSHION.
'ANG ON A MINUTE, WHERE'S YOUR WILLY?

2


SUFFERIN' SPIDER-WEBS! WHAT DO I DO NOW?? I CAN'T FIGHT A FEMALE!' I CAN'T USE FORCE AGAINST HER-- BUT, IF SHE DOESN'T LET GO, THE OTHERS'LL PULVERIZE ME!
WHY DO THE WOMEN IN MY LIFE ALWAYS CAUSE NOTHING BUT TROUBLE ???

References

The samplings of comics images were taken from the private collections of Mr Stuart Willis and Ms Barbara Postema.

Mulvey, Laura. 1999 [1975]. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." In *Film Theory and Criticism*, edited by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, pp. 833-844. New York: Oxford UP.

A Dozen True Facts about Fredric Wertham That I Will Only Reveal For John Lent

Bart Beaty

University of Calgary

1. In 1968, Wertham gave a speech entitled "The Cult of Violence" at The Communications Forum. Al Capp was in the audience.

2. Wertham was the psychiatrist in the famed Lonely Hearts murder case, but never testified as he told the defense that his findings would not help their case.

3. In 1946 Wertham spent four months in Maine, recuperating from illness.

4. Wertham's play, *The Consultation Room*, was never produced.

5. Wertham's article, "The Air-Conditioned Conscience," was solicited by *The Nation,* who then rejected it. It was published three months later by *The Saturday Review of Literature*, who were looking for "a Swiftian review of the leading 'inspirational' books which have had such a vogue during the last four years."

6. The original title for Wertham's first major article on comics, "Comics... Very Funny!" was "The Case of the People vs. Comic Books."

7. In 1950, Wertham interviewed filmmaker William Wyler about his film "The Heiress." He submitted a long article based on the interview to *The Saturday Review of Literature*, who chose not to run it as their film articles were exclusively written by John Mason Brown.

8. Complete text of a letter from Siegfried Kracauer to Wertham in 1962: "Dear Dr. Wertham, Thank you for letting me have a reprint of your interesting article, 'The Scientific Study of Mass Media Effects.' I am glad to have this piece."

9. Wertham sent complimentary copies of *The Circle of Guilt* to Martin Luther King, Paul Robeson and Jean-Paul Sartre.

10. *The World of Fanzines* was written in 62 days.

11. Driving directions to Wertham's home in Kempton, PA; from Allentown: Take route 22 west to Fogelsville, turn right onto 100 North, after 5 miles take left turn to road to Kempton, follow this to 863 north (7 miles) right turn, take first dirt road on left (about a mile); first farm just over the hill.

12. In 1942, Adolf Meyer recommended Wertham for a job at McGill University, which is where I completed the research for my biography of the man. Although he was not offered the position, Wertham benefited throughout his career from Meyer's interest in his work, just as I know that I have benefited immensely by John's interest in my research.

Japanese Comic Art History's Mystery Bearded Figure

Ronarudo Suchuwaato (Ron Stewart)

The recent discovery of ancient Japanese manga showing a mysterious bearded figure has led to a reexamination of comic art. While research is still in progress, examples of what appears to be the same bearded character recurring intermittently throughout Japanese comic art history has led to a surge in research and a number of competing theories regarding this phenomenom within Japan. The character, a stout bearded male, is unusual because he appears to not be of Japanese or Asian descent, and has distinct facial features in manga dating back to a time when caricature was rare. In this short paper, I will introduce examples uncovered by researchers which clearly show this character's appearance in comic art from the Heian Period (794-1185) through to the later half of the 20th century. I will also give an overview of current thinking about the bearded character's meaning and origins.

On May 25th, 2005, a picture scroll, along with some notes relating to it, were discovered concealed within the walls of Kartuunyama Temple on the outskirts of Kyoto, while restoration work was being carried out on its main pavilion. The scroll appears to be almost identical to the first scroll of the famous early 12th century *Choju Giga* [Frolicking Birds and Animals] scrolls. *Choju Giga* is said to have been created by Buddhist Abbott Toba and was considered to have been the earliest example of satirical Japanese comic art. Carbon dating, however, shows this newly-discovered scroll actually predates the *Choju Giga*, and has led to the inevitable conclusion that the *Choju Giga* is a mere copy of this scroll. What differentiates these two scrolls is the inclusion of a humanoid character on the newly-discovered older scroll (**figure 1**), and it is this bearded character that has stimulated much interest and is the focus of this paper.

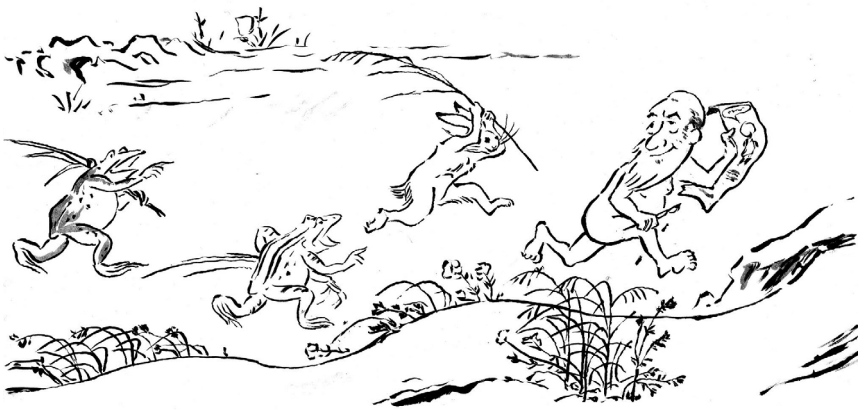


Figure 1. Newly discovered 12th century picture scroll pre-dating the Choju Giga.

According to the notes found with the scroll, this bearded figure represents a mysterious visitor who would appear every year during a fasting period in the third month of the lunar calendar (in Western terms, April in the period of Lent) asking artists and critics of the time to contribute to his almanac scroll. The notes also hint that this bearded figure tried to promote new forms of visual expression – the use of frames and text with images. He also attempted to promote the Chinese concept of *fushi,* one of the four currents, or breezes, said to flow through the arts. This word comprised of the characters *fu,* meaning breeze or hint, and *shi,* meaning to stab or speak ill of, roughly translates as "satire" in English. According to art historian Mitara Sugee, the image shows the conservative artisans of the time, depicted as frogs and rabbits, chasing off the bearded character for attempting to poison the "purity" of their wordless and flowing picture scroll narratives. Mitara speculates that authorities, fearing the spread of satire would undermine their power, demanded that all traces of this bearded promoter of satire be erased completely. This resulted in the edited version, the animal-only *Choju Giga*, and the concealment of this original scroll in the temple.

Further investigation has turned up other examples of this bearded figure throughout later periods of Japanese comic art. He appears sporadically over the next four centuries, though his appearances begin to increase in frequency from the beginning of the Edo Period (1600-1868), coinciding with a boom in publishing and comic expression. In every case the character appears to be an instructor, promoter, and/or defender of comic art expression. The example shown here (**figure 2**), from the very rare 1720 edition of *Toba-e Akubi-dome Paato tsu* [Toba-picture Yawning-remedy Part 2], has what most experts argue to be the same bearded figure.

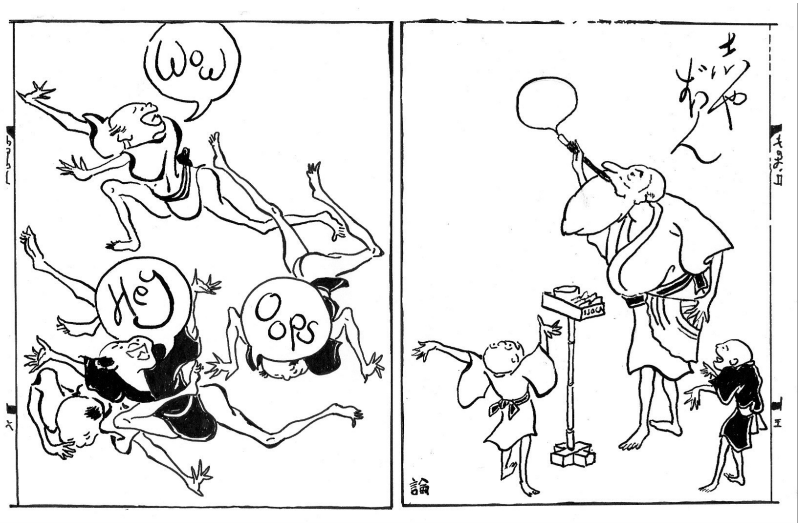


Figure 2."Bubbles" from Toba-e Akubi-dome Paato tsu (1720) by Takahara Satchusai.

The picture is a two-page spread from a genre of humorous picture books known as Toba books, which were popular in the Osaka area in the early 1700s. Manga historians, such as Futakihara and Himizu, regard these as the earliest commercially-produced forms of comic art in Japan, and, with its pictures on every page and comic artist guild seal of approval on the cover, an antecedent of modern comic books. In the picture here, titled "*Shabon* [Bubbles]," the bearded figure creates bubbles, or balloons, to the delight of children and adults who are no longer weighed down by the mass of their own expressions, but rather able to give voice to their feelings by using these bubbles. Professor of Edo-period literature Megane Jiji argues that this bearded character is definitely the same as the one that appears in the recently discovered Heian scroll, and that this bearded promoter of comic art saw his wish for panel use and combinations of words and image come to fruition by the time this book was published. Professor Megane also asserts that in this picture the bearded figure is advocating the use of "word balloons" common in comics of today. This was a ground-breaking development in Japanese comic art development; prior to this period the words spoken by characters in Japanese art were free-floating, and it was at times difficult to tell exactly who was speaking. Professor Megane is, however, puzzled by two aspects of this picture. One is why this bearded character has reappeared after a five hundred year absence (theories regarding this aspect will be discussed below). The second puzzling aspect to Megane is why the utterances in this picture appear to be English.

The bearded character has also been found in later Edo comic art as well, including in the little known *Hokahokasai Manga vol. 8a* (1834), where his winking face and knowing grin can be found on the opposing page to one of the few satirical pictures produced during this period of authoritarian oppression of satirical expression.

After Japan opened to the West in the mid-1800s, Westerners appearing in comic art became more common, but despite this, the bearded promoter of comic art is still distinguishable making numerous appearances in early Meiji period (1868-1912) comic art, the so-called *ponchi*. After a period of oppression of political expression in Japan from around 1910, clear examples of the bearded comic art promoter appear again in the 1920s. One example is the following picture (**figure 3**) by cartoonist and pioneer Japanese comic art historian, Futokihara Seiki (1885-1958). The picture's caption reads, "The Other Side of the Person Who Preaches Prohibition of Alcohol as Seen by a Cartoonist [*Manga-ka ga mita kinshu o toku hito no rimen*]." In it, the bearded character, grasping a pen in one hand and paper in the other, shows the reader one of the possible roles of comic art in society – using cartoons as journalism to expose hypocrisy in an easily-accessible manner. The publication of this cartoon, drawn around 1920, roughly coincides with a period often called "Taisho Democracy" as it was a time in the Taisho period (1912-1926) when political expression and activity again flourished.

Figure 3. "The Other Side of the Person Who Preaches Prohibition of Alcohol as Seen by a Cartoonist" (ca. 1920) by Futokibara Seiki.

The next example (**figure 4**) is from a darker period in modern Japanese history. It appeared in *Tokyo Hihi Newspaper* in April 1940 on the eve of the Pacific War, and ten years into the Japanese Fifteen-Year War on the Chinese mainland. It was a time when nationalist sentiment, along with a belief in a Japanese spirit, held sway amongst the populace. In this comic strip *Neko-nana Sensei* [Professor Puss Seven] by cartoonist Shimaga Keizo (1900-1973), the same bearded character seems to appear in the final panel. The cartoon is set in front of a barber shop with the word "barber" written in English on the door. The two schoolboys in the first panel comment about the door. Reading right to left, the first boy says, "I wonder how you read that English?" The second boy replies, "I don't know either." In the second panel one boy says, "If they wrote in Japanese characters [*Nippon no ji*] we could read it, couldn't we?" In the third panel, Professor Puss Seven begins writing on the door with brush and ink. In the final panel, after having written "*ba-ba-",* the Japanese phonetic rendering of the English word "barber", on the door, he walks away smiling smugly saying, "I wrote it in Japanese." In the final panel the barber looks on in anger. The humorous point is that Professor Puss himself was unable to replace the English word with a "real" Japanese word for barber, such as *tokoya*, but merely rendered the English word in the Japanese phonetic syllabary. However, put within the context of Japanese comic art history, an oppositional reading is possible. If the reader recognizes, as experienced comic readers and artists would, the bearded character as a kind of spirit of comic art that is woven throughout Japanese comic history, the character can be seen as venting anger at nationalism that attempts to separate Japanese expression from that of others, and abhorrence at the use of jingoistic terms like *Nippon* rather than *Nihon* to express Japan. In other words, the artist, through the bearded character of Japanese comic art, offers a protest against the times.

During World War II, Japanese comic art was seen by authorities as trivial and was mostly suppressed, but soon after Japan's surrender comic art again began to flourish and appearances of the bearded character increased. Just as in earlier periods, the character's appearances seem always to be linked to the promotion and protection of comic art. A good example of this is an untitled cartoon (**figure 5**) by Oshima Ko from his weekly strip *Sennin Mura* (Village of Ascetics) serialized between 1956 and 1968. Oshima, best known during his 60-year career for his illustrations and strips of erotic women, plays in this strip with the grammar of cartooning. The running character in panel one becomes a formless mass of speed lines by panel three, such is his speed. Enter here the bearded character of Japanese comic art as a (magical?) hermit, or ascetic, who calls out "Okay! STOP." In the next panel the mass of lines falls to the ground with the sound "basa." The bearded figure turns to the reader and winks knowingly. Japan's most famous manga critic Natsugan Fusayesutsuke has asserted that this cartoon lays the foundations for the breaking of new boundaries in comic art expression in Japan since the 1960s. Natsugan, while acknowledging similarity of this character with bearded characters over the

previous 800 years, is however reluctant to speculate about

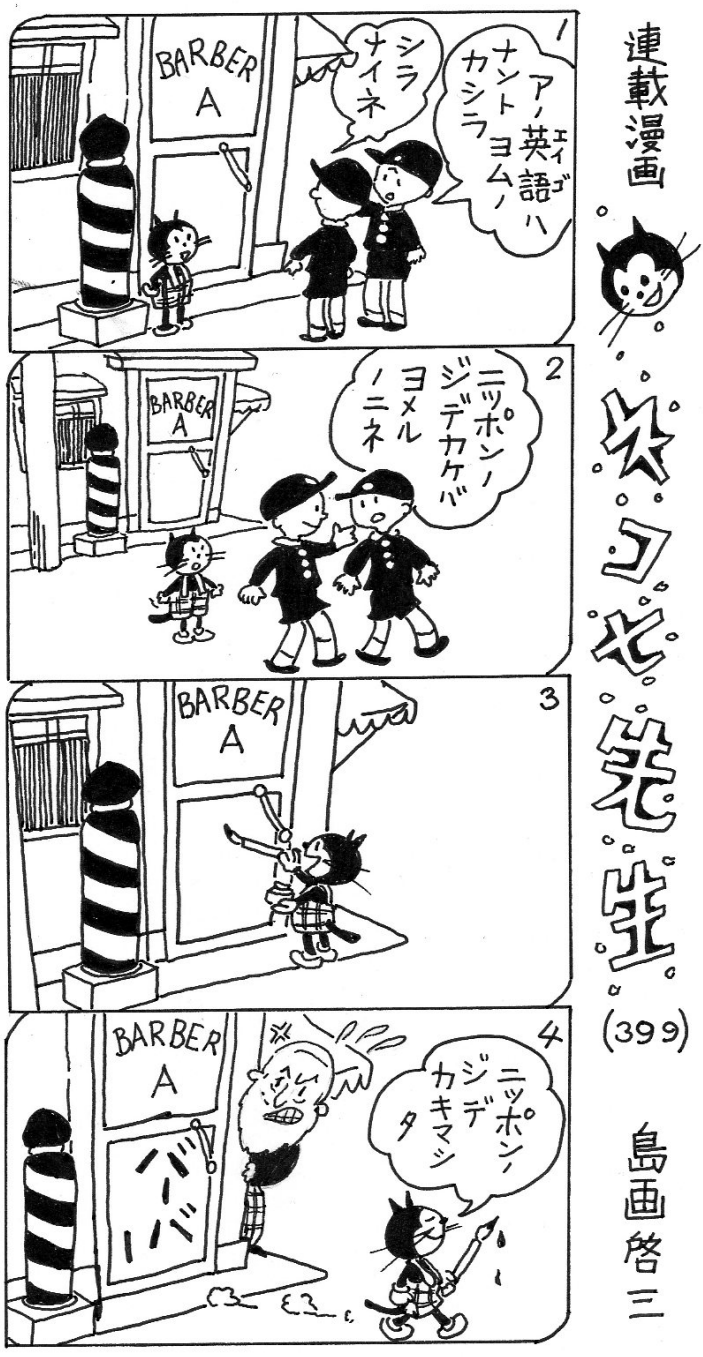


Figure 4. Shimaga Keizo's 1940 comic strip Neko-nana Sensei.

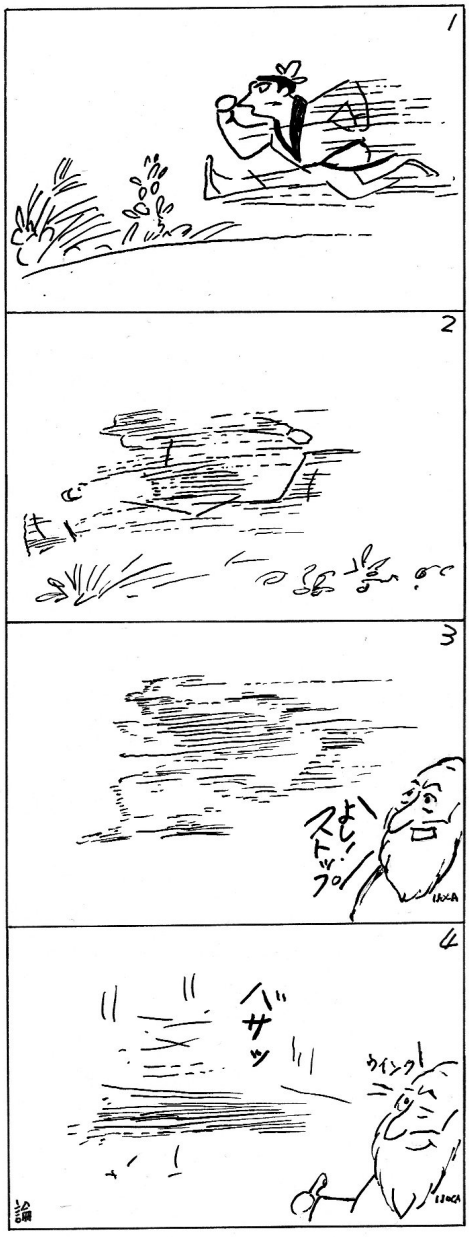


Figure 5. Untitled 1956 cartoon by Oshima Ko from his weekly strip

any direct connection between them, saying, "Don't be silly, no one can live that long." Nevertheless, many experts are adamant there is a strong connection, in both appearance and personality traits (i.e. promoting all forms of comic art) attributed to the bearded character over time, and his presence has been essential to Japanese comic art development. This revelation, along with the national importance placed on manga, has prompted the Japanese Government's Department for the Preservation of National Comic Art to sponsor a number of research groups to uncover more examples of this bearded character and unravel the mystery of just who this character is and what he represents.

Currently there are a number of theories regarding the meaning and origin of this bearded character. There are two groups that think this bearded character is based on a real extraterrestrial visitor. These two groups, the Japanese Society of Extraterrestrial Research and Cosmic Art Education, and the Eric Von McDoonagan Institute Manga Special Task Force, point to Jomon period (10,000 BC to 300 BC) pottery shaped like space suits and assert that Japan has a long history as a preferred site for landing aliens. Noting this and the fact of the bearded character's non-Japanese features appearing in times when Japan was isolated from the West, they claim he is therefore definitely not of this world. They also point out how the bearded character appears in Japanese cartoon art over an eight-

hundred year period and conclude that it has to be an alien visitor, as only aliens would be capable of traveling through time. They further claim that the purpose of the breaded alien visitor is to teach earthlings higher levels of communication to prepare them for contact with other planets in the future. Another theory, put forward by a recently-founded breakaway Buddhist sect, Ahum Shinrikyo, is that the bearded character is bodhisattva Jonrento, who takes human form at times to guide humans toward enlightenment. Another sect has arisen based on the worship of comic art, the Greater Vehicle Pen and Ink True Faith Brethren. They believe that the bearded figure is not one person, but rather an Inuit, descended from the God of Comic Art, and his later children. They claim he came down from the North to teach Abbot Toba how to draw, but after being chased off by other artisans not ready for his teachings, he vowed his sons and his sons' sons would continue to fight for the spread of comic art in Japan.

A fourth and more persuasive theory argued by manga historians Himizu, Higeo, and Miyanoto, as well as folklore specialist Yanagidada, is that the bearded character is not real, but rather personification of a belief in the power of comic art derived from a number of regional folk beliefs. They believe that after the figure first took form in the Heian period, it became the model for later depictions of the spirit of comic art. From historical periods through to recent times, official antagonism against, and fear of, this form of expression had kept it largely suppressed and absent from official histories. However, cartoonists for hundreds of years have formed secret societies in Japan to keep this bearded personification of comic art spirit alive. At times, these cartoonists have used him to subtly protest and satirize censorship and authoritarianism, to call for new comic art developments, and promote the spread and enjoyment of this medium. It is expected that continuing research will deepen our understanding of this bearded character, and reveal if it is just a Japanese phenomenon, or if, as some experts believe here in Japan, this spirit of comic art has a global reach.

(Apologies to the artists Toba Sojo (fig.1), Takahara Shunchusai (fig.2), Hosokibara Seiki (fig.3), Shimada Keizo (fig.4) and Kojima Ko (fig.5) for misuse of their names and great artwork. -- Ron Stewart)

Battle of the Titans: The Great National Geographic - New Yorker Cartoon Rivalry

Cathy Hunter and Michael Rhode

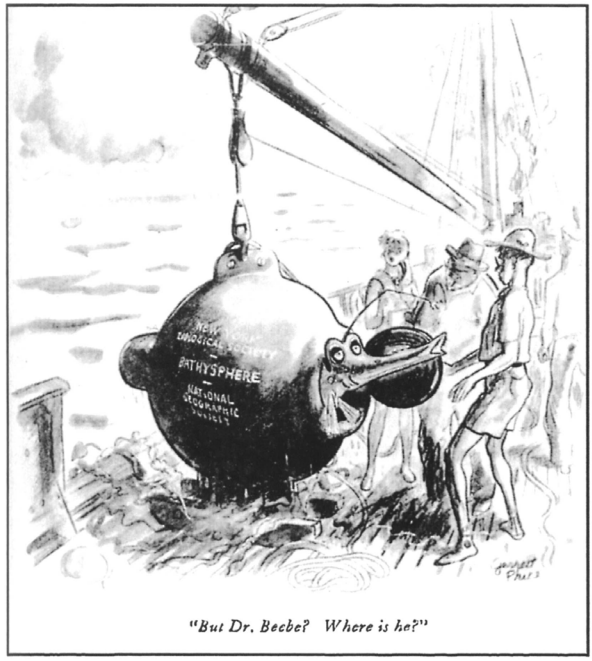
Very few realize it today, but in its early years the *National Geographic Magazine* was in the forefront of cartoon imagery. Prior to their regular publication of photographs, the magazine was known for its creative use of cartooning. Although all you ever hear about is his invention of the telephone, *Geographic* president Alexander Graham Bell was a prolific cartoonist. In order to save his family's social standing, he used the pseudonym "H.A. Largelamb." He liked kites and loved to make fun of Wilbur and Orville's pathetic attempts at flight and planned a whole issue of the *Geographic* to spoof their proposed experiments at Kitty Hawk. His prim and proper Edwardian son-in-law, titular editor of the magazine, frowned on this, however, and steered his over-the-top father-in-law towards experiments on sheep which are no longer discussed by the magazine.

Bell's early interest and support for cartoons in the magazine meant that they continued to appear, and his support for new technologies brought surprising dividends. An early animated version of "March of the Penguins" (1910) is much sought after among discriminating collectors. Cartoon serials of the adventures of Robert Peary and Admiral Byrd, complete with spin-off toys available at local trolley stops, were all the rage among youngsters. A rare and priceless map of Alaska featuring Scrooge McDuck's gold rush expedition to the Klondike recently surfaced in a museum exhibit from his legendary money bin. It was to have been featured in the magazine's "Klondike Number," but got bumped for a map from the Hudson's Bay Company showing routes to the goldfields.

The New Yorker, founded in 1925, was determined to topple the *Geographic's* cartoon dominance. Declaring in the first issue, "It has announced that it is not edited for the old lady in Dubuque," the *New Yorker* quickly began running cartoons featuring virgins in compromising situations with *National Geographic* magazines. During those crucial early years, the *New Yorker* got a leg up on the *Geographic*—it was much easier to make fun of the people who read the *Geographic* (not to mention those crazy explorers with their pith helmets) than those stylish cosmopolitan types who sip martinis and spend weekends in the Hamptons. People never got the geographic allusions anyhow—just where is Tuvalu? Are the people funny-looking? Is it near Brooklyn? They even made fun of the *Geographic's* editor, describing him as "…endowed with the sprightly air of an inquiring grasshopper… he knows that wars are fleeting affairs compared to birds and he does not propose to wait for the end of the conflict (WWII) before doing justice, editorially, to his favorite topic [- birds]." Notwithstanding snide comments, *Geographic* was able to hire several of the *New Yorker's* best cartoonists, such as James Thurber, for a brief period before the

provincialism of Washington drove them back to New York. Suspicions of an underhanded win abounded as well - people named Guido not usually seen in Washington loitered in the *Geographic's* parking lot and the one year the magazine was printed in New York, "mistakes were made." *The New Yorker* also won by descending into publishing any cartoon including drawings of dogs by blind old men. No matter how incomprehensible or deviant the cartoon, they would publish it, counting on the snob appeal of their reputation to overawe a reader's natural response of "I don't get the cartoons in the *New Yorker*."

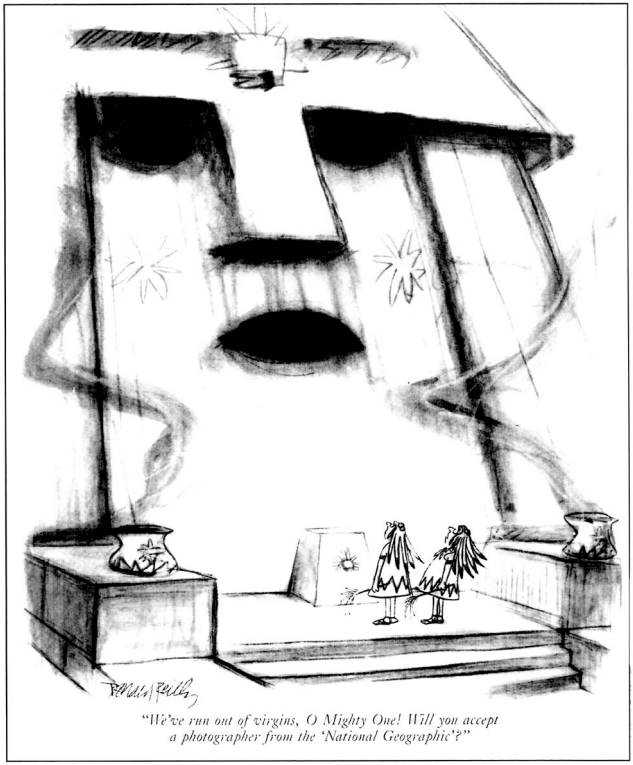
Irrepressible grandson Melville Grosvenor appreciated his grandfather's efforts though, and tried to resurrect the dying art of geographic cartooning. When he became editor, he planned to run a comic strip in every issue, but the board of directors distracted him by offering money to start a TV program instead. "The Amazing Globe of Grosvenor" went head-to-head with "The Wonderful World of Disney" for several seasons before Walt Disney bought him off with an offer to let him design parts of the new Disneyland, including Adventureland's Jungle Cruise. The *National Geographic*-commissioned stories illustrated by cartoonists Carl Barks and Hergé were returned to the men to use in other publications. The comic strips Grosvenor desired for the main magazine were eventually done decades later by June Brigman for the spinoff *National Geographic Kids.* Although the *Geographic* clearly conceded the role of main cartoon publisher to the *New Yorker*, persistent rumors of a 'graphic novel' version of the magazine have been heard in recent years, so perhaps the battle will be rejoined.



***This cartoon caused great consternation in* Geographic's *offices as it appeared to suggest that they did not take great care of their contributors. The caption reads,* "But Dr. Beebe? Where is he?"**

LOU MYERS

One of the cartoons that **Geographic** ***struck back with. The caption read*** **'Lion: "Whew! The *New Yorker* really is indigestable."'**



"We've run out of virgins, O Mighty One! Will you accept a photographer from the 'National Geographic'?"

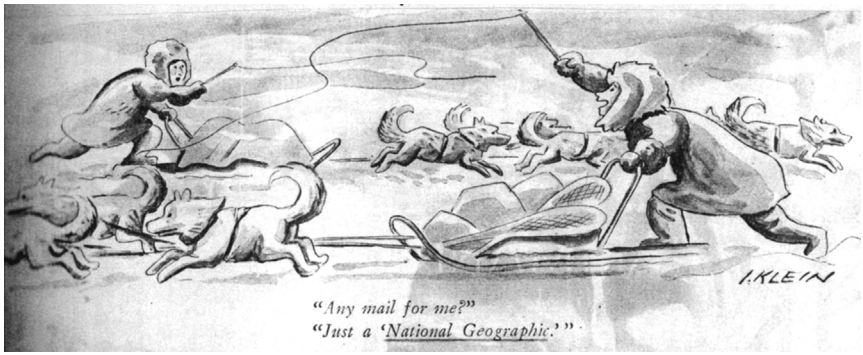
National Geographic *complained that this* New Yorker *cartoon endangered their staff. The caption reads* "We're out of virgins, O Mighty One! Will you accept a photographer from the *'National Geographic'*?"

★ July 21, 1934
THE
NEW YORKER
Price 15 cents
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE
"That was in '26. Now here I am again in the spring of '29."

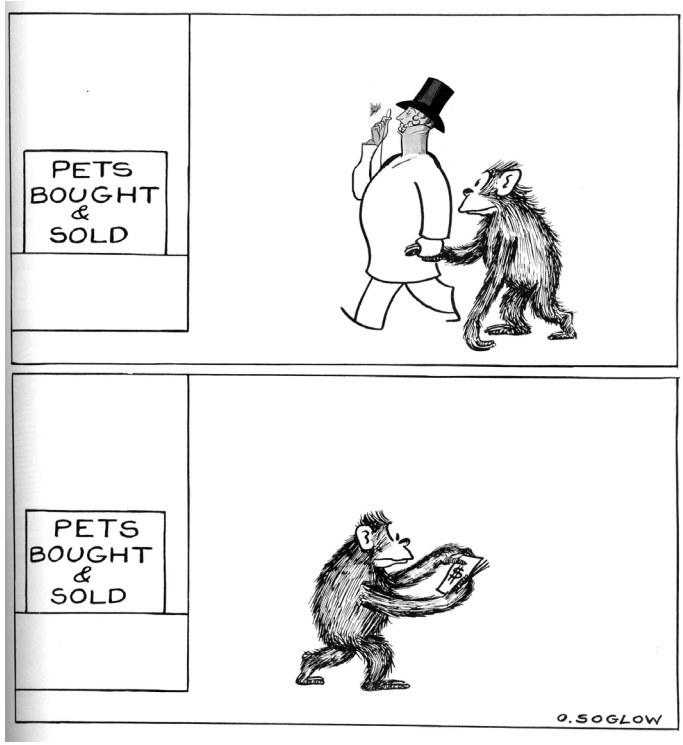
Obviously, the **New Yorker** ***was not above stereotyping to make its point. The caption reads*** **"That was in '26. Now here I am again in the spring of '29."**

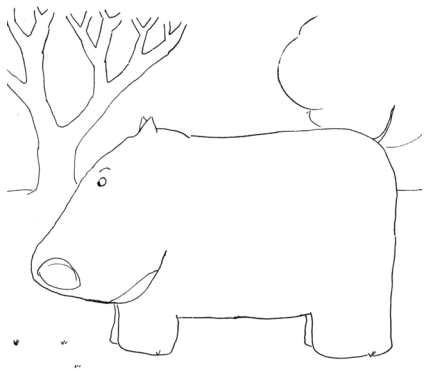
This 1990s cartoon was rejected by the **New Yorker**, ***but*** **Geographic** ***used it in promotional material to show how omnipresent their magazine was.***

Another cartoon trumpeting **Geographic's** ***widespread market of readers throughout the world.***



Geographic ***poached Ottoo Sogolow to parody*** **New Yorker** ***icon Eustace Tilley.***



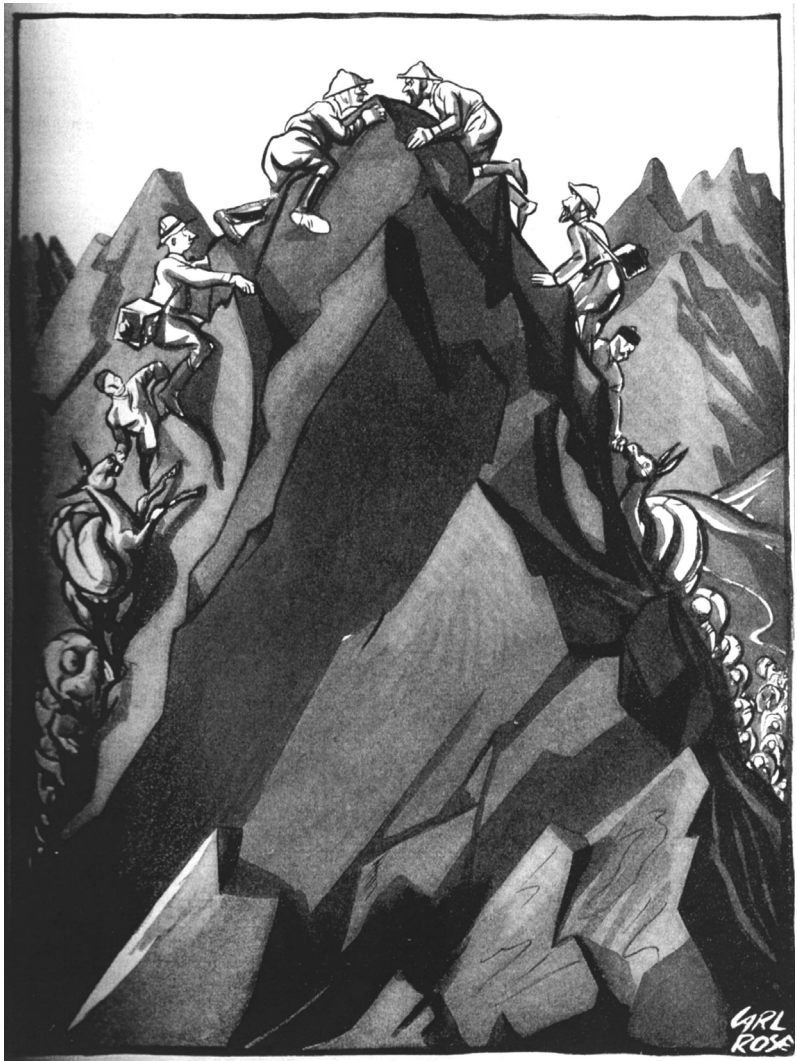


Thurber's odd-looking animals, including these unpublished reindeer and hippopotamous drawings , meant that he was not a good match for the **Geographic's** ***focus on wildlife.***

This cartoon ran accidentally in both publications. The version shown is the **New Yorker** ***one; the*** **National Geographic** ***caption read*** **"Yeah, I used to work for the** ***New Yorker*** **until I heard** ***National Geographic*** **paid better."**

"I just got damn well fed up with being formal all the time."

Another **New Yorker** ***cartoon criticising the conduct of*** **National Geographic's** ***expedition planning. The caption reads*** **"Scientific Dilemma – Perplexing result of a mixup in the offices of the National Geographic Society in which two outfits were sent on the same expedition."**



SCIENTIFIC DILEMMA

Perplexing result of a mixup in the offices of the National Geographic Society by which two outfits were sent on the same expedition

Out of this World (…and back again…)

Craig Fischer

Out of This World
(...and back again...)
For John, from Craig
I FIRST MET JOHN AT THE PCA CONFERENCE IN TORONTO IN 2002, THOUGH I HAD HEARD OF HIM BEFORE THAT.
WEIRD FANTASY #16
I'D READ HIS WORK, AND I WAS AMAZED THAT A PERSON COULD PRODUCE SO MUCH SCHOLARSHIP.
KRAMER'S ERGOT #4
WE TALKED A BIT IN TORONTO, AND JOHN TURNED OUT TO BE TERRIFIC...
SPIDER-MAN #2
...QUICK TO LAUGH, SOFT-SPOKEN, PREDICTABLY SMART AS HELL.
GOODY-GOOD COMICS
I NEXT SAW JOHN AT SPX/ICAF, LATER IN 2002.
MAD #11
ONE NIGHT DURING SPX, I WALKED BACK TO MY HOTEL WITH JOHN AND HIS WIFE
VING.
BRAVE AND BOLD #29
SOMEHOW, I LAPSED INTO TELLING JOHN ABOUT MY MOST RECENT MID-LIFE CRISIS...
TALES OF SUSPENSE #33

...HOW I WAS BORED WITH MY TEACHING, WORN OUT BY DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITIES...
ALF!
...ALIENATED FROM MY BEST SELF.
ROG-2000
JOHN RESPONDED BY POINTING OUT THAT HE'D HAD A MID-LIFE CRISIS THAT ALMOST KILLED HIM.
CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL #3
HE SPOKE FRANKLY ABOUT HOW HIS TROUBLED CHILDHOOD LED HIM TO DRINK TOO MUCH AS AN ADULT.
HARD-BOILED DETECTIVE STORIES
I BEGAN TO THINK...
WARPSMITH
IF JOHN COULD BEAT ALL HIS DEMONS, MAYBE I COULD TOO...
2 ROOM SOCKO!
MAYBE I COULD BUILD A LIFE TO BE PROUD OF...
JUSTICE LEAGUE ADVENTURES #1
...MAYBE I COULD FEEL HUMAN AGAIN.
"THE HARVEY PEKAR NAME STORY" (PASSIM)
THAT'S WHY I ADMIRE JOHN FOR HIS SCHOLARSHIP, BUT I LOVE HIM FOR HIS EXAMPLE.
THE END.

Animated Yoga

Cathy Hunter

The ancient practice of yoga is very popular in the 'toon world. Seeking to unite body and mind, yoga is of particular benefit to those crime-fighting superheroes who need to relax after a hard day packing off unenlightened types to Arkham Asylum.

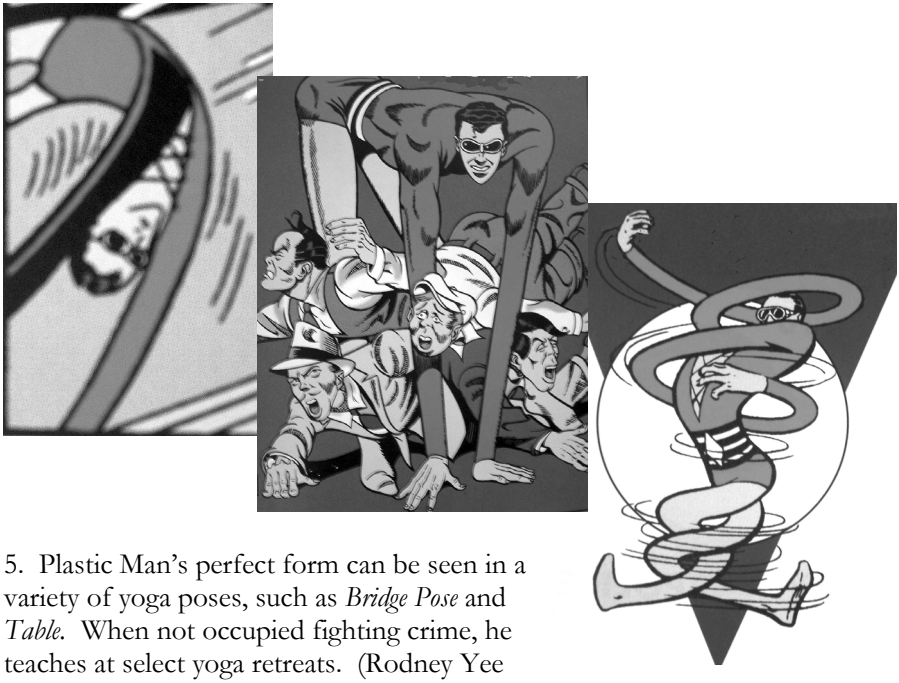
The Shadow, due to his years of immersion in the ancient wisdom of the Orient, acts as yogi to his animated pals.

1. Here, Aquaman demonstrates *Lord of the Fishes Pose*, always good for getting in touch with your underwater friends.

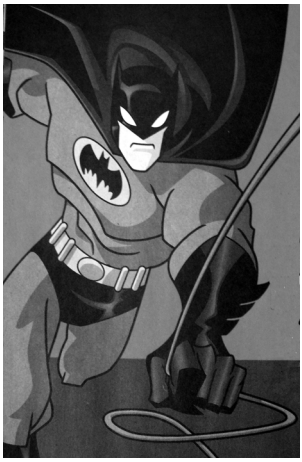
2. Krypto shows us *Upward-Facing Dog (Urdhva Mukha Svanasana)*, a natural for this canine superhero.

3. Bulletman demonstrates Urdhva *Hastasana in Tadasana*, or *Mountain Pose with Arms Overhead.* Blastoff optional.

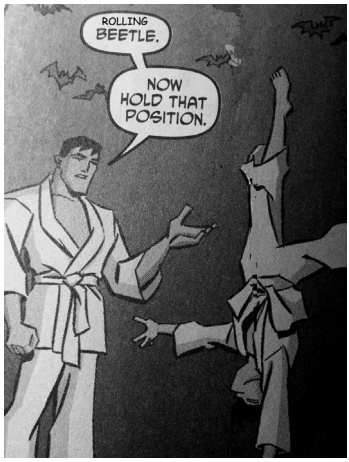
4. Scrooge McDuck demonstrates the *Mad as a Wet Hen Pose* upon learning the Beagle Boys have just broken into his money bin looking to steal his lucky dime. His nephew Donald advises deep breathing. When he's in a better mood, Scrooge enjoys doing endless *Porpoise Dives* into his piles of gold doubloons.



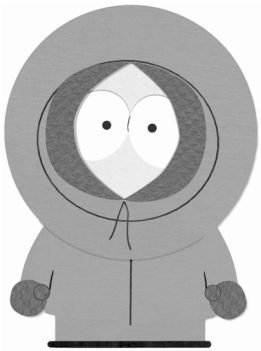
5. Plastic Man's perfect form can be seen in a variety of yoga poses, such as *Bridge Pose* and *Table*. When not occupied fighting crime, he teaches at select yoga retreats. (Rodney Yee called him a show-off.) Human pretzel that he is, he gets a little carried away with his version of *Lord of the Fishes*.



6. Batman is not averse to using props to help him attain more advanced poses. Alfred, however, is exasperated by his constant dangling from the chandeliers in Wayne Manor.



Here he directs his protégé and sidekick Robin—Holy Asana, look at that *Beetle Pose*!

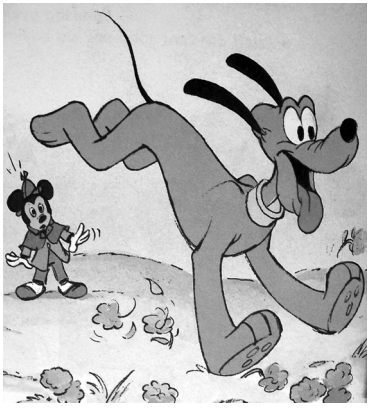


7. Kenny, from *South Park*, demonstrates *Corpse Pose.*

8. Hawkman's *Pigeon Pose in the Park* is really a clever ruse to get him a snack.

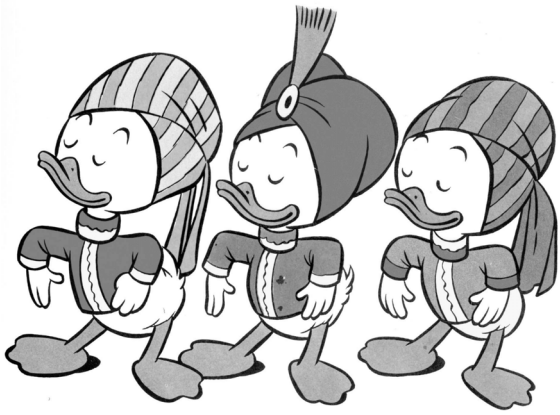
8. Catwoman is the essence of agility as she slinks through a series of *Cat Poses* with her feline friends.

10. Radiating love for all humankind, especially Mickey, (or maybe just ready to chase a ball) Pluto is shown here in *Upward-Facing Dog* (Adho Mukha Svanasana.) Tail-wagging optional.



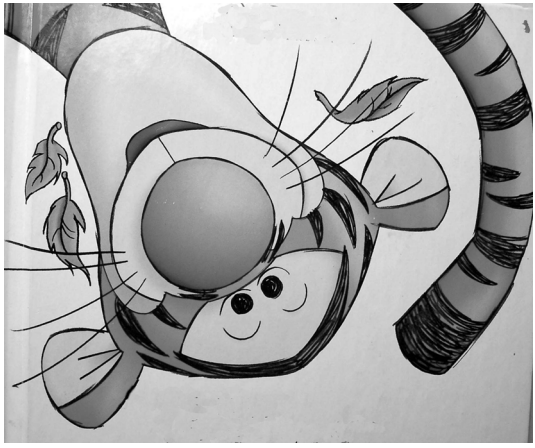
11. Bugs Bunny demonstrates the *Wascally Wabbit Pose.*

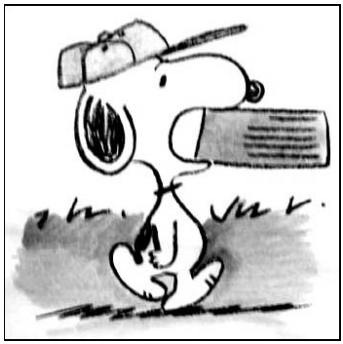
12. Dick Tracy attempts to relax his jaw. Keep concentrating on your breath, Dick.



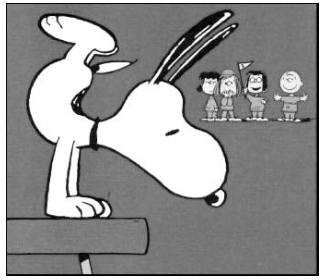
13. At an ashram in India, Huey, Dewey & Louie work on their meditation while Uncle Scrooge chases after the Lost Treasure of the Bengal Raj. (There's a Junior Woodchuck badge at stake.)

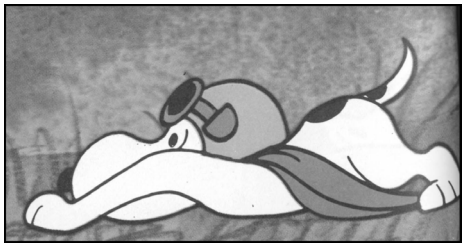
14. Tigger has attained a higher level of enlightenment than most, joining those yogis of near-mythic status who could levitate.





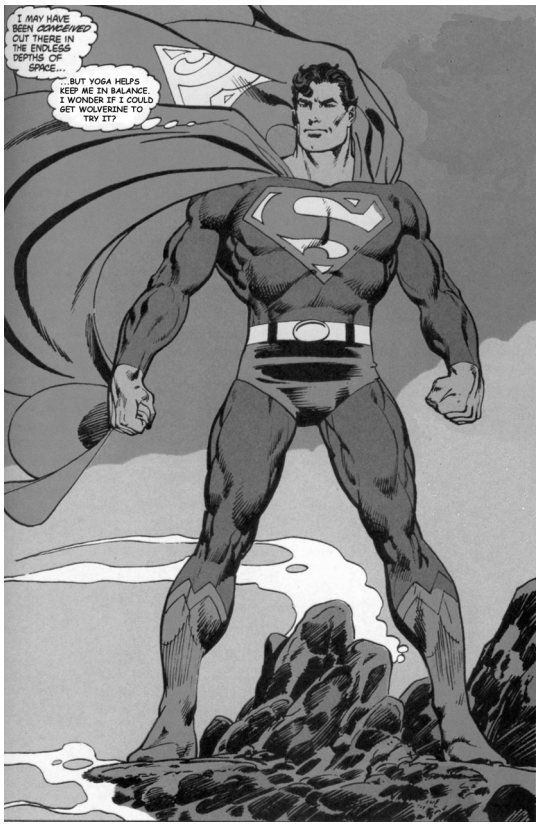
15. Snoopy, a master at being one with the universe, balances his supper dish with ease– really, it's just a matter of concentration. (He can also do it standing on one paw and leaning forward.) The Peanuts gang admires his fine canine form as he easily swings into a *Peacock Pose*. This Renaissance Beagle is also quite fond of the *Caterpillar Pose*, good for the lower back pain that can sometimes plague smaller dogs and very useful for avoiding detection if you are a World War I flying ace shot down behind enemy lines...





16. Spider-Man shows he's got more going for him that just being a web-swinger. His *Frog Pose* would make him at home on any lily pad. Ribbit.

17. Superman, the Man of Steel, offers his best *I'm In Charge Here Pose.* Kryptonians are not known for their flexibility, but he's making excellent progress.


I MAY HAVE BEEN CONCEIVED OUT THERE IN THE ENDLESS DEPTHS OF SPACE...
...BUT YOGA HELPS KEEP ME IN BALANCE. I WONDER IF I COULD GET WOLVERINE TO TRY IT?

18. Ziggy, of course, embodies the meditative and contemplative nature of yoga.

Fantagraphics Books Searches for Saints

Reporting from the Vatican -- Since the 1980s, Fantagraphics Books has been bringing first class graphic novels and comics to our stacks. During the 1990s, an economic crisis forced them to create Eros comics -- a graphic erotic line to reinforce their comics sales. Now the Presidents of Fantagraphics are searching for a spiritual compensation that balances their previous sin line. They decided to open a new biographical line of comics under the name Santagraphics Books to focus on the lives of Saints and different representations of the Virgin Mary. The Fernandez Brothers, Jaime and Gilbert, are working already on an extended book focusing on the Virgin of Guadalupe and Saint Rose of Lima. Gilbert Fernandez is making a wonderful homage to Saint Mary of Tonantzintla, the indigenous interpretation of the Virgin Mary that was possibly equivalent to the pre-Columbian Female God of fertility -- "the mother." Following the delicate style of medieval graphics of religious books, this collection promises to be one of the most interesting and complex ever done in North America. Eric Reynolds, director of the Santagraphics collection and a key member of the Fantagraphics team remarked, "It is not about religion per se, it *is* about the iconographic tradition that Catholicism involves over 2000 years." In the U.S.A, due to Protestant influence, there is a lack of knowledge related to the possibilities that saints can bring to daily life. Superheroes are the closest the comic industry can get to a Saint, but for Fantagraphics books that is not enough. "The alternative industry needs their own heroes," says Eric Reynolds "we chose the Catholic influence because our president Gary Groth has close ties with Italy."

It is true that Mr. Groth is well-known in Italian lands due to his regular visits to festivals and conventions, but he was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Both countries have large populations that have been raised Catholic and also read comics. Doctor Godness from the Medical School of Passion explains that "Religions with strong iconographic traditions will have more openness to understanding graphic novel and comic books." On the other hand, Fantagraphics Books is tired of what they believe to be a wrong use of comics and religion by their main rival Chick Publications and its cartoon gospel line. Kim Thompson explained: "Their comics are in plain bad taste, with not a single good effort to bring any beauty and passion. They just sell bad comics and fear of God!!!" For many, Chick Publications has been the religious reference for comics over the last 40 years, but now the Santagraphics collection from Fantagraphics will bring a new understanding of God in the most beautiful iconographic tradition.

Dan Close, for example, is developing an intense piece entitled "God World" where he recreates the consolidation of the Christian religion after the death of Jesus Christ showing the key influence of the Saints Apostles on the configuration of the Christian Church. Chris Where is developing a more domestic piece, focusing on the simple life of one of the most beloved Saint Pancracio. The young San Pancracio was decapitated at the age of 14 in the early IVth century because he embraced the Christian religion. He is the Saint of the impossible causes and Chris Where considers that readers deserve to learn more about this young Saint (who has a strong iconography over sixteen centuries). Jessica Ready-Able is working on Saint Barbara, one of the first feminists. There are two different versions of the origin of this Saint from the IIIrd century, and she is one of the most popular Saints of medieval times that protected miners and firefighters. Charles Burnt is working on a graphic novel about Saint Jeronimo, one of the original doctors of the Latin Church and the father of Biblical Science. Other brilliant artists are choosing more Saints for this Santagraphic line.

Finally the American reader, whether religious or not, will be able to learn some spiritual and historical facts about one of the most influential religions of western culture without feeling the fear of hell. The comic books published by the Santagraphics line will not try to convert. "It is not a crusade to make people follow the doctrine of the Vatican," declares Gary Groth, "It is just an effort to educate our readers about iconographic's traditional link to comics." And it is true, during the medieval and golden age times, people used to learn the history of religion through the graphics attached to the narrative of the religious iconography. "We wrongly believed that the biographical and autobiographical elements associated with the Comics Underground, Robert Crumbly and the new wave alternative generations, was something new. Well, we were wrong." explains Eric Reynolds, "For centuries the Catholic Church had their own team of comics artist…most of them priests or monks, but they were also comics artists." The Vatican is very pleased to hear about this Santagraphic line to be done by good artists with knowledge about art, western culture and storytelling tradition. They feel that, in some way, this Santagraphics line will redeem Fantagraphics from its dark past with Eros comix.

Ana Merino

Therian Blackenshort, Theban political cartoonist

Therian Blackenshort, the Theban political cartoonist, has died at the age of 93 after a brief illness. Volume 3 of John A. Lent's authoritative 15-volume reference work *A Brief Survey of the Cartoonists of the Moons of Jupiter* called Blackenshort "a pioneer of three-dimensional editorial cartooning"[1] and "one of the most well-known political cartoonists in the galaxy if not the universe."[2]

Blackenshort was born on the lunar colonies, but emigrated to Thebes at the age of four, when his mother, Signe Bell-Blackenshort, assumed the editorial duties on the Theban Edition of the *Universal Daily Standard* feed. Blackenshort was a student in the initial class of the Theban Royal Academy of Arts, focusing on sculpture and ceramics, but dropped out six credits shy of graduation to work for his mother as a feed monkey at the UDS/TE. During his down times at work, Blackenshort would draw three-dimensional doodles which soon developed into humorous single panel cartoons. He began to slip these into the feed on slow newstainment days; they were instantly popular and Blackenshort moved from being a senior feed monkey to a position as executive cartoonist. When the UDS/TE folded after the UDSFOXGANNETT unmerger, Blackenshort moved to the *Theban Monarchist Almanac* feed, where his work took on a decidedly more political tone. He remained at the TMA for some twenty-five years.

During this period he was a strict neo-royalist and is thought to have designed the famous crown and penguin logo of the People's Monarchist Movement party. Lent notes that "While Blackenshort was clearly a man of strong ideological convictions, as a cartoonist, he was an equal-opportunity rabble rouser."[3] One of his most well-known cartoons depicted King Leopold Curzwell as a constable on the twentieth-century tele-program *COPS* pursuing shirtless delinquent taxpayers through the Van Allen belt. When King Leopold was deposed in the Coca Cola™ Coup, Blackenshort backed Preston Spears-Curzwell, both publicly and in his cartoons. After Spears-Curzwell was assassinated, and Shiloh Du Lac Curzwell installed herself as Empress, Blackenshort was arrested and confined to house arrest for four years. After his release, he was a founding member of the dissident Anarcho-Royalist movement, helping found the *New Masses and Mainstream Monarchy* feed. His cartoons during this period relentlessly pushed for the return of the Spears-Curzwell line of succession and frequently depicted Empress Shiloh as a baying dingo.

His cartoons also showed his concern about the increasing influence of immigrant Scientologists on Thebes and during this period, he created and popularized the visual shorthand of depicting members of the Democratic

Scientology Collective with a halo of stars. As democracy came to Thebes, NMMM dropped its anarcho-royalism and became the *New Masses* feed.

Blackenshort slowly withdrew from publishing, contributing only the occasional gag cartoon to the NM feed. On his eightieth birthday, he was again jailed briefly by the majority Scientologist Government after sponsoring a competition in the *Radical Culture* feed for cartoons depicting the Prophet, L. Ron Hubbard. His own contribution showed Hubbard flying on a carpet of stars (which many thought to represent hallucinogenic drugs) while typing *Battlefield Earth.*

After his release from prison, Blackenshort left Thebes and retired to Io. Apart from a few appearances at University conferences and feed fan events, he disappeared from view. Married eleven times to seven different women, Blackenshort is survived by Elena Curzwell Stratton, his fifth, seventh, and eleventh wife.

Mark C. Rogers

Letters (continued)

Amateur historian SD of Washington, DC writes, "Dr. Lent, can I do an article for you on the three Robins?"*

J**OHN LENT** replies, "Sure. Robin Hood, Batman and Robin and who else? Christopher Robin? Fine illustrations in those Pooh books."

*Our non-superhero-comic-book reading editor **JOHN LENT** is unaware that, constantly pursuing the youth market, DC Comics has cynically cyclically killed, regendered, promoted and otherwise recreated the iconic *Batman* mythos character. Nobody who doesn't live in a basement cares.** - 2nd Class Office Boy Michael Rhode

Although I think there's been four, if you count Miller's *Dark Knight Returns*.*

But she's not in continuity.*

****Sad, isn't it?

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[1] Lent, John A. A Brief Survey of the Cartoonists of the Moons of Jupiter. 15 Vols. Luna City: University of the Moon Press. Vol. 3, 76

[2] Ibid., 145

[3] Ibid., 272

Faded Star Column

Rad Signal by Weary'in Ellis

Cough

Woke up this morning and wanted a cig and a shot. Too bad. Tough being a disembodied brain. Not sure how I can still feel phlegm rising to be spewed vilely across my stainless steel rat-free environment, but I do. God, I miss pubs. And booze. And women.

New column for IPJOCA begins. Seems like I've been writing these things for millennia, but it's only been a century or two.

Cough

Need Red Bull. Mainlining it through arteries for too many years to go cold like this. Bastards. Freon's a poor exchange.

Working on Transmet miniseries for Disney's DC-Marvel line. *Spider Jerusalem Meets Abraham Lincoln.* First in a series for young readers. Tempted to have Spider warn Lincoln about Booth, but have been threatened about that by Trans-Temporal *cough* Authority. Fuggin' bureaucrats – world could be a better place.

Been thinking lately about staging a live-action comic strip. Using volunteers from The Engine to stand across what's left of London – lots of empty space there – in poses with frames built around them. Could use holograms, but that's too close to old technology animation...

Cough

Strange days...

Sent via mobile device
sent from IPJOCA's Cryo-Lab facilities

Transcribed by 2nd Class Office Boy Michael Rhode

Give It Up For Lent!
E.C. Lockett

Leonardo da Vinci, The da Vinci Codex. With an introduction by Scott McCloud. Seattle: Fantagraphics, 2006. 192 pp. $39.99

Fantagraphics has scored a coup with the publication of *The da Vinci Codex*, proving that Italian Renaissance painter Leonardo da Vinci invented the graphic novel. Apparently there were originally ten copies of *Il Salvadoro (The Saver)* in existence, each one laboriously hand-copied by the Master[1] on oxhide, but nine of them were burned by the inquisition, which insisted that the sequential art in the books was causing juvenile delinquency. The one surviving copy was discovered by Gary Groth under five copies of *Orlando*, by Virginia Woolfe, at a used bookstore in Hay-On-Wye, which Groth visited after a comic convention in Brighton, England.

As is well known, da Vinci had a habit of writing backwards, so his graphic novel reads from right to left instead of from left to right, thus making it also the first manga in the world. It takes a bit of getting used to, but eventually the reader will get the hang of holding the book up to a mirror in order to read it.

The story, while beautifully rendered, is a familiar one. During a sojourn in the desert, da Vinci's protagonist, Jesus, is bitten by a scorpion that had been struck by lightning, and gains the power to walk on water. Da Vinci's logic is questionable here, since it is not known whether scorpions can walk on water, and there appears to be no connection between lightning and water.[2] At first reluctant to use his powers, when his stepfather, Joseph, is killed by a criminal, Jesus decides to spend the rest of his life saving people from danger, thus becomes known as *Il Salvadoro*, or The Saver.

Da Vinci appears to have given his story a pre-Freudian[3] subtext. In his alter ego as a humble carpenter, The Saver supports his widowed mother, Mary, and has romantic problems with his girlfriend, also named Mary: a hint of Oedipus, perhaps? Da Vinci, not the clearest of writers, may have inserted other subtexts into his story, but at times his writing is so garbled that it almost reads like code. Nonetheless, as the earliest comic yet discovered, *The Da Vinci Codex* is of great interest to any comic historian.

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[1] Photocopy machines had not, of course, been invented yet. However, there is some evidence that da Vinci had drawn out the plans for, and possibly even made, a prototype photocopy machine, powered by a slave on a treadmill. Later he replaced the slave with an ox, transferring the slave to another treadmill, which powered his prototype computer.

[2] Except for the fact that you can get electrocuted if lightning strikes the pool you're walking in.

[3] There is some evidence that daVinci had come up with the idea for, and drawn plans for, Freud. However, as cigars had not yet been invented, his concepts were never realized.

In his introduction, Scott McCloud makes the interesting suggestion that da Vinci actually intended *The Saver* to be a web comic, and had already drawn out the plans for a computer. Unfortunately, the craftsman whom he had hired to carve a computer chip out of titanium went blind, and the slave who was powering the prototype computer by treadmill, since electricity had not yet been invented, died of exhaustion.

Trina Robbins

Trina Robbins has a degree in Advanced Mummery from the Possum Kingdom Lake Institute for Nerve-wracking Lady Authors With Screechy Voices. In her spare time she likes to bite her nails and sacrifice small, helpless animals to the Goddess of Eternal Youth.

Purty Pitchers All In A Row: A Review of The Interplanetary Comic Art Bibliographies of JOHN LENT Comprehensive Companion Series.

According to that font of all semantic knowledge, dictionary.com, the term "comprehensive" is defined in a bunch of different ways, but they all mean really, really complete, which sums up nicely both the works of JOHN LENT toward the task of cataloging every known piece of scholarship relating to Comic Art, and the recently released Comprehensive Companion Series, which collects all of the material from JOHN LENT's previous International Comic Art Bibliographies, updated to present day, and completes, insofar as JOHNLENTLY possible, the task of cataloguing all known comic art-related scholarship from the heavenly bodies of our Solar System.

While JOHN LENT's bibliographic efforts are well known and respected, a review of this revision to his scholarship was an absolute necessity. The only way I could pry a set free of charge from the publisher was by making myself eligible for review copies – a sad necessity in light of the exorbitant price for the full set . . . why else would anyone review a bibliography? In fact, the final pricing structure is still in flux, with the Publisher reportedly still working out a deal with a number of different mortgage agencies.

As in previous editions, these volumes note the bibliographic information for scholarship of comic art, animation, caricature, and gag, political, illustrative, and magazine cartoons from the JOHN LENT database of over 563 periodicals, indexes, aural and visual conference recordings, and Bazooka wrappers with little notes taken on the back – not exactly thrilling reading, but quite nice to have around the house, relieving me of the necessity to get dressed and stroll down to the library when I want to look something up.

The first two titles in the formerly named "International Bibliography" series are *Comic Art of the Inner Rim of the Solar System: The Interplanetary Bibliography Comprehensive Companion Volume One: Illustrated Classics,* and *Comic Art of the Outer Rim of The Solar System: The Interplanetary Bibliography Comprehensive Companion*

Volume Two: Dwarven Boogaloo. As you might suspect, they do tend to be rather large titles, the first volume weighing in at 39.2 pounds, the second only 13.8. Fortunately, the boxed set comes with a complementary JOHN LENT SIGNATURE EDITION TRUSS ®™ for those willing to open the collectible packaging. Each volume collects previously published material from the "International" series and updates of that data to present day. As evident by the subtitles, *Volume One* consists of scholarship based out of the Classic Solar System, made up of Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune, while Volume Two consists of the same for scholarship based out of the Dwarf Planets of Pluto, Ceres, Xena, and Chachi. The original plan was for a single Volume to inaugurate the new Series, until the relocation of the Comics Arts Conference and Comicon Interplanetary to Pluto eight years ago. That venue shift, and the associated moves by various small presses, academic publishers, and Disney Fan Clubs, led to an explosion of published material coming from the so-called Dwarf Planets, making this collection a necessity for any academic collection dedicated to comic art.

Slated for publication but as yet unfinished are *Comic Art of the Man Made Satellites of The Solar System: The Interplanetary Bibliography Comprehensive Companion Volume Three: L5 and Nivenevin* and *Comic Art of the Man Made Detritus of the Solar System: The Interplanetary Bibliography Comprehensive Companion Volume Four: Spaaaaaaaace Junk*. As yet there is no definite word on the status of *Comic Art of the Variant Vibrational Planes of the Solar System: The Interplanetary Bibliography Comprehensive Companion Volume Five: Beyond The Beyond*, but the outlook is quite positive.

Dr. Solomon Davidoff

Martianorum Mangorum Universalis Historia,* John A. Lent, Thierry Groensteen, Daniele Barbieri. Preface by Umberto Eco III.[1] Price: 500 cubits on Earth (plus 100 cubits for shipping in Solar System by local hyperspace or 50 cubits for i.p.p.o.d.)

Until the famous mangarchaeologist Frederik L. Schodt, sent to the Martian colonies some years ago, discovered plentiful Martian tankobon in the same caverns where our interplanetary hero John Carter had woken up some years ago, the scientific community did not believe that Mars had a rich manga culture. This mysterious, ancient alien civilization, is today still unknown but

[1] The authors respectively represent the SuperUnited States of Americas - Ambassador of the SUSA in Amaterasu's Japanese Empire, Colonie de Belgique de la Nouvelle Republique Italienne et de l'Europe Unie - Governateur de Bruxelles, and Nova Republica Italiae et Unitae Oeuropae - Consul of Bologne. Eco III is a cyberdrone built in Queen Loana's Factories in Nova Alexandria, Italia.

possibly the same one that many centuries ago visited Earth to leave in Japanese islands the colonies that gave life to the autochthonic Japanese tribes. According to Schodt's and Paul Gravett's amazing but well-documented theories, this civilization must have left another colony of Sararimen and Roritas on Mars (these were apparently the two main social classes which probably allowed the reproduction of the species), in order to let a new civilization rise.

After the discovery of the tankobon, Schodt, helped by Lent himself (the main author of this book), began to excavate the ground around those caverns, and also discovered big deposits of pachinko balls and used white pants marked to sell at a few yen. Definitely, these were the proof of an ancient Alien Japanese Civilization on Mars.

Schodt, with his young colleagues Paul Gravett, Patrick Drazen and Brian Ruh, began a voyage across the stars some years ago to find the Alien Japanese Civilization (while hoping they will be greeted friendly as "The Four Immigrants Manga-scholars"). Meanwhile, John A. Lent, with his unreachable experience and knowledge, has decided to establish a chronology and social history of this amazing corpus of Martian manga, while awaiting, like all of us, the return of the manga-voyagers from outer space (a trek that has already inspired Antonia Levi's new book, *Manga-scholars in the outer space* which will be reviewed soon).

A complete explanation of the richness of *Martianorum Mangorum Universalis Historia* would be too long for this little review. Our simple aim here was to let the reader know that this book, all written in Latin due to the Latin Year promoted by the Big Cabinet of Roman Earthian Universities, is 20450 pages long and divided in 5 tomes. It also contains contributions by interplanetary scholars such as Michael Rhode from Pluto, Kiyomitsu Yui from the Titan's Japanese colony, Jean-Marie Bouissou from the far Oort nebula, a big essay on manga and religion by Beth Davies from the Space-Denver Orbital Station, and many others.

The book is introduced with a Preface written by the second drone of Professor Eco, whose brain is preserved in Nova Alexandria, and accompanied by thousands of images provided by professional scanlators who privately assaulted Mars in these years, establishing a new colony there (the well-known Otakuonia).

Marcus Titus Pellitterius

(Marco Pellitteri)

* i.p.p.o.d. = interplanetary print on demand

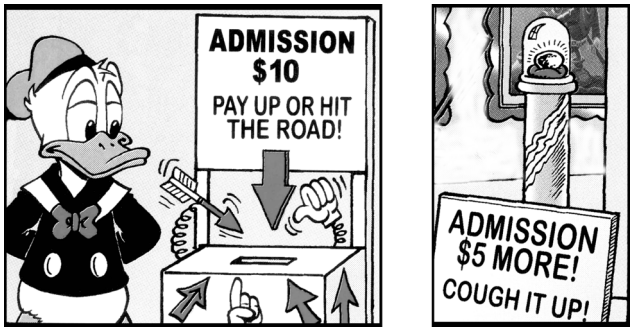
The McDuck Collection: World's Greatest Collection of Rarities, Calisota: Duckburg Museum.

Multi-squillionaire Scrooge McDuck recently displayed a collection of archaeological and historical artifacts from his personal holdings - a rare exhibit of material that is usually held in the architecturally-undistinguished Money Bin that sits atop Killmotor Hill. The exhibit's base charge was $10.00. Scrooge's collections, built on his exploration and travel around the world, led to a wide-ranging, and somewhat incoherent exhibit with no clear theme. Unfortunately, that lack means that it also reads nearly as hagiographic, with Scrooge at the center of any story. Minimal labels such as 'oar' or 'Philosopher's Stone' are poorly-done and do not convey any context. Also McDuck's collecting methods tend to destroy any physical context, either archaeological or historical, that the object might have had.

An additional $5.00 charge was levied to see the goose egg gold nugget from the Yukon gold rush that started Scrooge's fortune as well as paintings by the noted 'Good Duck' artist Carl Barks. This charge seemed extreme, but typical of Scrooge who obviously set the charges (see illustration); an overheard conversation between Scrooge and his nephew Donald Duck revealed that the exhibit was designed "to get [Scrooge's] hands on their $10 per head admission fees!"[1] Other, more monetarily-valuable material, such as the egg, was displayed in a special burglar-proof room. The anti-burglar methods were extremely irresponsible -- when the goose egg's pedestal was disturbed, an airtight barrier sealed off the room. Perhaps fortunately, the Black Knight's attempt to steal or destroy the exhibit led to its premature closing. One hopes that the next time the Duckburg Museum will not be tempted to abdicate its curatorial duty in favor of currying favor with the ultra-rich, especially a plutocrat such as McDuck whose acquisition methods are so antithetical to the role of the Museum.

2nd Class Office Boy Michael Rhode

[1] Quote and all illustrations from Don Rosa, "The Black Knight Glorps Again!", *Uncle Scrooge # 354*, Gemstone Publishing, June 2006.



McDucks' nephew noting the main charge; goose egg nugget with secondary charge.

Security camera feed of the Black Knight in the McDuck exhibit.

Disney Planet Amusement Facility, the dwarf planet formerly known as Pluto, Sol system.

With the 2006 downgrading of the planet Pluto to a "dwarf planet," the Disney Corporation first considered acquiring this under-utilized real estate for commercial amusement purposes. But those plans lay dormant for some time, until interplanetary travel became more feasible for families with disposable income. The recent development of the Space Taxi service has provided the populace of Earth with the means to travel among the planets; Disney has seized upon this opportunity, its long-gestating plans bursting into fruition in the furthest reaches of the Solar system.

After the fiasco that was "Disney Park,"[1] the Disney Corporation was looking for a way to repair their image. Now, with *DISNEY'S PLANET PLUTO*™, shareholders may breath more easily (albeit through oxygen tanks).

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[1] A self-contained island in the Caribbean, Disney Park represented an attempt by Disney to move beyond its traditional animatronic figures (made popular in attractions like The Hall of Presidents) and costumed "cast members" by taking animation to its ultimate degree: the truly

Pluto's un-Earthly conditions seem tailor-made to Disney's corporate needs. For example, concessions at *PLANET PLUTO* are sure to be both popular and profitable. Its equatorial surface gravity of 0.81 m/s^2 means that a person who weighs 100 pounds on Earth would only weigh 8 pounds there. No one will shy away from fried, fatty, or fructose-filled treats when they feel lighter than they ever have before! The climate (ranging from -235 to -210 C) will ensure a healthy trade in Disney-branded environmental habitat clothing. With a surface area of 16,650,000 km^2 (or approximately 0.033 Earths), Pluto offers ample room for extended "line-mazes" leading to rides and other attractions. However, the dwarf planet's drastic axial tilt (120 degrees) has necessitated radically shortening two out of every four table legs, leading to the somewhat bizarre sight in the cafeterias of all the children sitting on the north side of the tables and all the adults sitting on the south.

Of course, scientific and historical purists will fault the Disney Corporation (as they always do) for the subtle changes which inevitably accompany Disneyfication™. Pluto's radical 17.14 degree orbital inclination to the ecliptic has been corrected to Earth-standard via the detonation of only a few small thermonuclear MousekeBombs™ (the fallout from which will not reach Earth until decades after the company's present shareholders are long-since deceased). The "Historical Markers" located throughout the park, purporting to educate visitors about Pluto, name Walt Disney as the discoverer, not Clyde Tombaugh; but how can one argue when these visitors (a) arrive specifically for a Disney-branded experience, (b) bring with them their love of absurdly proportioned cartoon characters, singing animals, and *The Shaggy Dog, Parts I-XXVI*, and thus obviously aren't interested in historical or scientific accuracy, and (c) have never heard of Clyde Tombaugh. And, of course, Pluto's satellites Charon, Hydra, and Nix have been re-named to the more family-friendly Huey, Duey, and Louie.

These small quibbles aside, *DISNEY'S PLANET PLUTO*™ provides a valuable and much-needed vacation spot for entertainment-starved Earthers who have been on the waiting list for attractions like *Disney's Rhode Island*™ or *Disney's Australia*™. And only at this newest theme park will visitors actually be able to view – finally freed from its decades-long imprisonment in a liquid nitrogen storage jar – Walt Disney's frozen head.

Gene Kannenberg, Jr.

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animate, ie to create life. Life, I say! Through a complicated, unreproducable, and ultimately fatal process, Disney Imagineers™ mutated DNA from mice, ducks, elephants, dogs, etc. to produce living, intelligent simulacra of characters such as Mickey & Minnie Mouse, Donald & Daisy Duck, Dumbo, and Goofy (plus, to a lesser extent, Pluto). The downfall of this endeavor has been documented in literally painstaking detail by Crighberg, Houston & Spielton ("M-I-C, C Is for Carnage," *Studies in Ethically Dubious Bio-Genetic Engineering* [27.4 (2017): 1176-1283]).

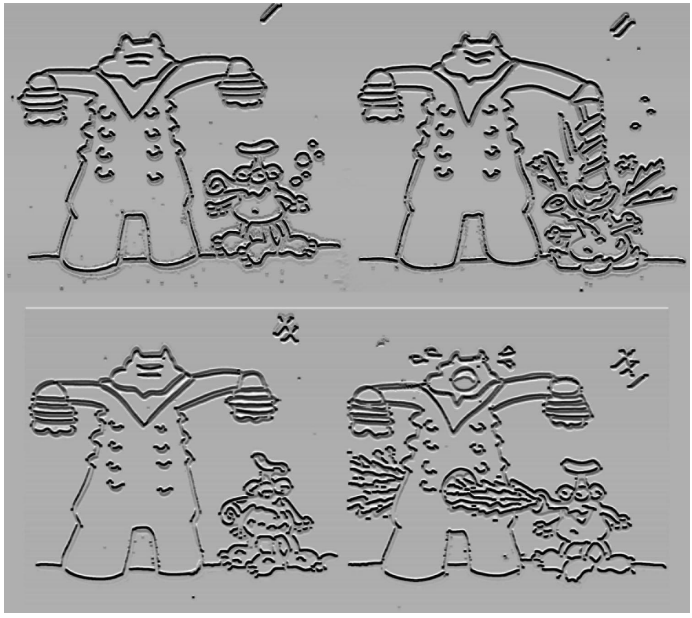
Correction

In my article "Sequential How-to Illustrations in Cookbooks: an Interplanetary Survey of Hazardous Enthymemes," published in a predecessor volume of this journal, I included a digression about the *Compendium of Saturnine Proto-Humor* in which I referred to a particular example as "the first joke in the book." It has been brought to my attention that the jokes in that compendium are not arranged chronologically, and so the oldest joke in the book actually appears on plate MCCCCXCII. I have attached a copy of that earliest extant piece to accompany this erratum notice.

Other scholars have also informed me that, although all criminal charges against its editors for infringing Saturnian intellectual property laws were dropped, the *Compendium of Saturnine Proto-Humor* remains a controversial academic source because it uses inconsistent definitions of "proto-humor," contains repeated spelling problems (for example, with "it's," "there" and "sonodiegetically,") and because during the Thirty Year Flame War its editors allegedly conceded fabulating most of their more interesting examples, one example at a time.

Also, I hope it was clear from the context that the word "never" was inadvertently omitted from that sentence of my article which begins "under any circumstances." I regret these errors.

Leonard Rifas



The earliest extant joke in the compendium.

Anticipatory Errata

Thanks to a Groening Foundation grant, the editorial office at *IPJOCA* ®™ has recently acquired a Wells-Hunter Anachroscope. We have therefore inaugurated the practice of combing future issues of the journal for errata. We hope this innovative practice proves helpful and efficient, though we cannot assume responsibility for any resulting temporal paradoxes.

What follows is a corrected bibliography for McCoy Carleton's article, "Better than Literature: An Emerging Paradigm for Comics Studies," which will appear in *IPJOCA* ®™ 12:2 (2018). The full bibliography will inadvertently be cut short when the article is published.

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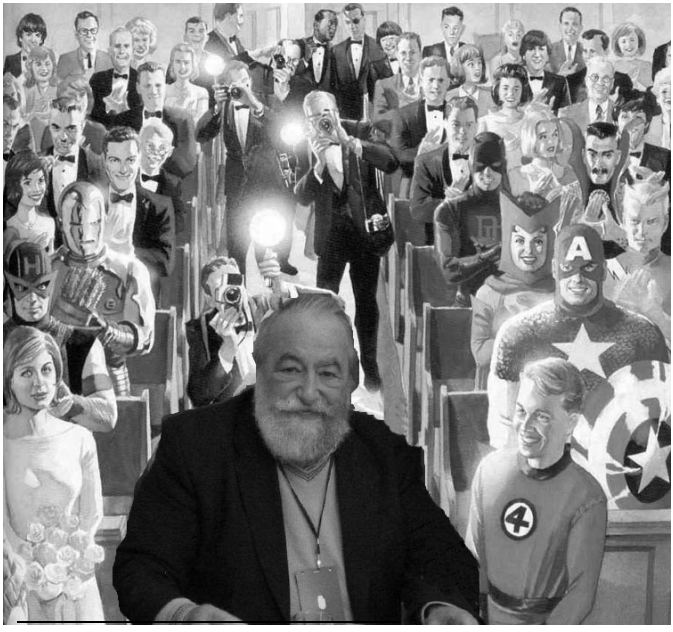
Charles Hatfield



Give It Up For Lent!*

* Photo of John from http://www.flickr.com/photos/kinojabber/86511505/

Comic Art Bibliography - New Resources in the Field

Compiled by 2nd Class Office Boy Michael Rhode

"All the Comics Fit to Print": The *New York Times'* losing fight against cartoonists.

"I'd like to buy a word balloon, Pat": The Wheel of Fortune method of producing comics.

The Romita Family Dynasty: Five generations drawing Spider-Man is enough! by Matthew, Mark, John & Luke Kubert.

Gasoline Alley, Vehicle of America's Imperial Outreach.

A Review of "Don't Cry for Me, Beethoven," the new *Peanuts* opera.

Gag cartoons of Frederic Wertham: A new discovery demands a new interpretation by Bart Beaty.

Kid Colt, Rawhide Kid, the Outlaw Kid and the Two-Gun Kid: Marvel's Western Gunfighters as Arrested Adolescents

"Ducks, ducks! Get 'em off me, Ronan!": A 70th Birthday Festschrift for Don Ault.

Cartooning in Dreamtime: Sequential Art or Incoherent Nightmare?

Commonalities and Cartoon Iconography in Twain, Groening, Poe, Schulz and Hemingway: Thomas Inge's 70th Birthday Festschrift, Ashland, VA: Randolph-Macon College.

Jim Davis: Great Cartoonist or the Greatest Cartoonist? (apologies to Colbert) by KA Laity.

The Erotic Art of Walt Disney.

Thomas Nast's Other Mascots: The Lesser-Known Whig Eager Beaver and Know-Nothing Platypus.

Goodman Beaver Speaks: "Kurtzman abused me shamefully."

Fast Times at Riverdale High: Archie and his girls.

President Duke's 2000 Victory, September 11th and his response; We ask, "Is Duke just a puppet of Trudeau's?"

When does animation become live action? The digital resurrection and joint films of James Dean and Betty Boop.

Paleontology Today presents A Field Guide to the Dinosaurs of *Alley Oop*.

Cows, chickens and Gary Larson: The SPCA finally takes a stand.

Secrets Revealed: Marie Severin *is* Stan Lee (and he's just an actor) by Katie "Wombat" Laity, *Comics Reporter* (April 1).

Bud Fisher, Ham Fisher and the Fisher King: Arthurian motifs in *Mutt & Jeff* and *Joe Palooka*.

An unbalanced life on a wooden leg and a pile of prejudices: The unauthorized biography of Al Capp.

Li'l Abner and Daisy Mae: A 1950s American Romeo & Juliet.

"Dreamy King": Gushing Girl Goths Go Goo-goo for Gaiman by K. Laity.

Captain America, Captain Savage, Captain Action, Captain Victory and the Problem of Promotion in Military Comics.

Hegemonic Reinforcement of the Patriarchical Establishment in Disney Cartoons with especial reference to *The Lion King*.

Are Single Panel Images Comics? We Don't Care. RC Harvey and Scott McCloud Can Fight It Out in the Afterlife by Marc Singer.

Scientists find meteorite in Kansas: Radar technology reveals odd metallic composition by Lois Lane, *Daily Planet* (June 30, 2006).

Hayao Miyazaki's animated adaptation of Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* is a 17-hour tour-de-force.

You're a @$£&*£$&%ing Idiot: Gentle Words of Advice Gleaned from the Comics of Warren Ellis by Dr. Kate Laity.

The Forgotten Scholarship of JOHN LENT: The Unjustly Ignored "Chronological Developments in Comic Art in 352 Volumes" by Dr. Gene Kannenberg.

"I Yam What I Yam" - Was Popeye's Vegatative Confusion a Symptom of Neurological Damage?

So Who is JOHN LENT really?

Xu Ying

Dr. John A. Lent has been teaching mass communications at the university/college level since 1960. He has held the title of professor since 1976. In 2000, he was Rogers Distinguished Professor of Media Studies at the University of Western Ontario, Canada. From January 2002 – January 2005, he has been guest professor at Shanghai University, and is professor in charge of Ph.D. dissertations at the Animation School of the Communication University of China.

Dr. Lent's educational background includes a Ph. D. in mass communication from the University of Iowa (1972), Master of Science and Bachelor of Science degrees in journalism, both from Ohio University, and additional study at Syracuse University, Guadalajara (Mexico) Summer School, University of Oslo, and Sophia University (Tokyo). He also studied mass media systems throughout India in 1980. He has been a consultant to different educational and governmental groups, has served on international cartoon and animation competition juries in the U.S., Korea, Cuba, Slovakia, Poland, Brazil, Colombia, Ukraine, Mexico, Serbia, Italy, and elsewhere, and has given hundreds of speeches, academic papers, and lectures to all types of groups all over the world.

His publications include 70 books and monographs he has authored or edited, three of which have won the Pat and Ray Browne Popular Culture Book Award and the Broadcast Industry Conference Award. Among his latest books are *Centennial Reflections on Cinematic China, Cartooning in Latin America, Cartooning in Africa, Animation in Asia and the Pacific, Illustrating Asia, Global Productions, Themes and Issues in Asian Cartooning,* and a ten-volume bibliography on comic art worldwide. Most of his books have dealt with Asian mass communications and were the first on their topics -- such as broadcasting, newspapers, film, popular culture, cartooning, animation, and media bibliography. He also pioneered in the study of mass communications in the Caribbean and wrote the first books on the subject. Other areas covered by his books are media and the international division of labor, transnational communications, New World Communication and Information Order, cartoons and comics, animation, women and mass communications, videocassettes worldwide, etc. He has also written more than 800 articles and critical reviews for a variety of journals and periodicals on every continent.

Additionally, Dr. Lent has actively engaged in either starting or upgrading professional activities in various areas. He founded and edits the *International Journal of Comic Art* beginning in 1999; for 26 years, he edited *Berita*, a periodical on Malaysia/Singapore/Brunei studies which he started. The Malaysia/Singapore/Brunei Studies Group was founded by Dr. Lent in 1975;

he chaired the body in its first seven years. From 1987 to 2001, he was founding managing editor of *WittyWorld International Cartoon Magazine*, and since 1994, editor of *Asian Cinema*. He chairs the Asian Cinema Studies Society, the Asian Popular Culture Group of the Popular Culture Association, and the Comic Art Working Group of International Association for Media and Communication Research. He founded the latter two groups and had a hand in the launching of the Asian Cinema Studies Society. He also is co-organizer of the Silver Fly Animation Workshop in Florence, Italy.

Dr. Lent serves or has served on many association and editorial boards, including the Popular Culture Association, *Comics Journal*, *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, *Crossroads*, *Human Rights Quarterly*, *Jurnal Komunikasi*, *Asian Thought and Society* (where he was also associate editor), *FECO News*, Philippines Studies Group of Association for Asian Studies, *Americana*, Cartoonists Rights Network, *ImageText: Interdisciplinary Comics Studies*, Feng Zikai Research Institute, *Media Asia*, Asian Mass Communication and Information Research Center, Bucheon Cartoon Information Center Library, Seoul International Cartoon and Animation Festival, *Mechademia*, and others. In 2003, the International Comic Arts Festival created the John A. Lent Scholarship to honor his services to the field. In May 2006, he was invited as a judge for Aniwow! 2006 International Student Animation Festival by Communication University of China and to be Honorary Chair of Asian Research Center of Animation and Comic Art at Animation School of CUC.

Dr. Lent has been invited by the Pulitzer Prize Board to serve as a member of the Pulitzer Prize Nominating Juries in Journalism for 2007. Dr. Lent's expertise will be called upon particularly in the areas of editorial cartooning and international reporting.

The honor is one of several the 33-year Temple University veteran received in 2006. In July, the Asian Media Information and Communication Center at its conference in Penang, Malaysia, presented Dr. Lent its first ever lifetime achievement award for his many contributions since 1964 to inaugurating Asian mass communications as a field of study. The XXX Salón Internacional del Cómic del Principado de Asturias in Gíjon, Spain, honored Lent in October with its Premio John Buscema Amar el Cómic Award for his lifetime contributions to comic art scholarship.

Two other honors recently came his way when he was asked to be visiting professor in charge of animation doctoral students at Communication University of China (where he established the Asian Research Center for Animation and Comic Art this year), and guest professor at the Animation School, Jilin College of the Arts in China.

Contributors' Self-Serving Biographic Blurbs

BART BEATY writes about comics for whoever will take his stuff: *The Comics Journal, ComicsReporter.com, IJOCA,* you name it. His book on Fredric Wertham was published in 2005 by Mississippi and his book on European comics came out in 2007 from Toronto.

SOLOMON DAVIDOFF teaches English, Humanities, and Social Science courses at numerous Boston area colleges and makes frequent use of comics and graphic novels within his various classes and disciplines. He has served as an Officer of the Popular Culture Association and is a member of the Editorial/Advisory board of the *Journal of Popular Culture*. He first met John Lent at a PCA/ACA National Meeting, when Lent discovered that Davidoff (a grad student at the time) managed to reserve first a book room sample for end-of-convention sale that they both wanted to purchase at the discounted rate (the book was one of Lent's comic bibliographies).

RANDY DUNCAN is professor of communication at Henderson State University. He teaches a wide variety of courses, including "Comics as Communication." His research is concerned with how the verbal and visual elements of communication blend, clash and otherwise interact to create meaning. Dr. Duncan is co-founder of the Comics Arts Conference, which will celebrate its 15th anniversary in 2007.

Thanks to CRAIG FISCHER, *IPJOCA*®™ has licensed the technology from Marvel Comics that brought an actual No-Prize Award directly to your physical location. The first correct entry to answer "Who are these freaks anyway?" will win an actual No-Prize.

C HILL is grateful to John Lent for being such a champion of comic art and a fine gentleman with a big heart! C Hill also thinks Mike Rhode would make a terrific comics character in addition to a top-class *IPJOCA*®™ Editor!!

CATHY HUNTER is married to the Second-Class Office Boy.

GENE KANNENBERG, JR. owes John Lent far more than he can say, not least of which is a sincere debt of gratitude (sprinkled with awe) for Dr. Lent's monumental accomplishments, and thanks for over a decade of support, encouragement, and friendship. He looks forward to chronicling John's next 70 years of scholarship at <ComicsResearch.org>.

K. A. LAITY writes damn near anything she wants to write about and often gets it published (kalaity.com); she contributed to this collection because she admires the man who has never accepted no for an answer and has blazed his own trail around the globe.

E. C. LOCKETT is Second-Class Office Boy's co-worker, a medical illustrator whose subjects are usually dead and dissected, persuaded by OB2C ("It's not that different, really") to try her hand at comics.

ANA MERINO, expert on deep soul and comics, works at Dartmouth College and considers John Lent a wonderful role-model.

MARCO PELLITTERI (b. Palermo, Italy 1974) is Ph.D. Candidate in "Sociology and social research" at Trento University in Italy. He is author of four books and several articles and papers on comics, animation and mass media.

BARBARA POSTEMA has been reading comics for as long as she can remember (chickens in Asterix's village surface as an early memory), and officially started studying comics as a Michigan State PhD student four years ago. She wants to thank John Lent for his example and support.

MICHAEL RHODE has been sucked deeper and deeper into the world of comic art due to John Lent and his example. He's Exhibition & Media Reviews Editor for *IJOCA*, co-author of the online *Comics Research Bibliography*, author of the ComicsDC blog, and way behind on a host of projects.

LEONARD RIFAS (an educational-comics guy) stands in awe of John Lent's many accomplishments as a communications scholar.

TRINA ROBBINS is a short and yappy feminist who knows lots of stuff about women cartoonists. Her holy grail is a set of Wonder Woman underoos, size large.

MARK C. ROGERS teaches communication and is the *IPJOCA*®™ Correspondent for The Moons of Jupiter.

RON STEWART is a Japanese cultural historian, comics reader and part-time cartoonist who is awed by John the human dynamo Lent's output, from *Witty World* to the latest issue of *IJOCA* and everything in between. Keep it up John!

STEVE THOMPSON is a free-lance bibliographer and indexer, and current president of the Walt Kelly Society. He is currently working on a book-length biography of Walt Kelly for University Press of Mississippi.

NICK THORKELSON's cartoons and comics have appeared regularly in *The Boston Globe, Dollars & Sense,* and *The Free Comix*. He has a bumper sticker that says "It's hard to be humble when you're Norwegian."

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